

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 257 044

CS 008 010

AUTHOR Gibbs, Vanita M., Comp.; Waterman, David C., Comp.
TITLE Reading and Reality. Proceedings of the Annual Reading Conference (14th, Terre Haute, Indiana, June 14, 1984).
INSTITUTION Indiana State Univ., Terre Haute. Curriculum Research and Development Center.
PUB DATE Apr 85
NOTE 83p.
AVAILABLE FROM School of Education Publications Office, Indiana State University, Terre Haute, IN 47809 (\$1.50).
PUB TYPE Collected Works - Conference Proceedings (021)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS English (Second Language); Oral Reading; *Reading Comprehension; *Reading Improvement; *Reading Instruction; *Reading Programs; *Writing (Composition)

ABSTRACT

Intended for reading teachers, this pamphlet contains the presentations of the 14th annual reading conference at Indiana State University, beginning with opening remarks by David C. Waterman and welcoming comments by J. Stephen Hazlett. In the opening address, "What Good is Comprehension without Composition?" by Sharon and David Moore, the role of composition in comprehension, classroom constraints limiting an emphasis on composition, and some comprehension strategies that emphasize composition are discussed. The five papers delivered at the conference are as follows: "The Writing Studio: Children Writing Every Day and Loving It" (Patty Smith); "Wellness and Reading: Implications for Instruction" (Mary Ann Simbol, Marilyn Klus, and Louise Clark); "Improving the Reading Abilities of Limited- and Non-English Speakers" (David M. Memory); "Creative Oral Reading" (Mark E. Stoffel); and "Reading Instruction, 1984: A Modest Proposal for Teachers and Students" (Aldo F. Cardarelli). (EL)

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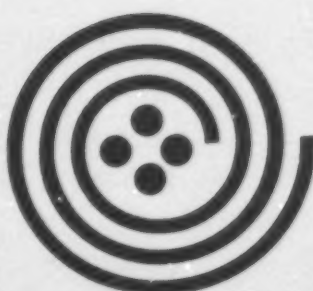
**Proceedings
of the
1984
Fourteenth Annual
Reading Conference
June 14**

READING AND REALITY

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School of Education, Indiana State University

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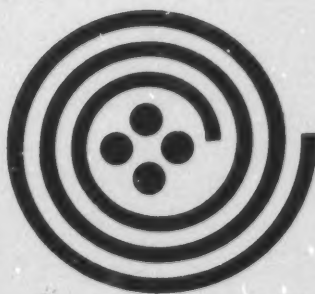
J. Stephen Hazlett
Dean, School of Education

James E. Higgins
Director

This monograph is one in a series
of selected aspects of curriculum development

Proceedings
of the
1984
Fourteenth Annual
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READING AND REALITY



CURRICULUM RESEARCH
AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION,
INDIANA STATE UNIVERSITY

● TERRE HAUTE

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Terre Haute, Indiana 47809

April 1985

PREFACE

"Reading and Reality," the focus of the 14th Annual Reading Conference, brought to Indiana State University Sharon and David Moore from the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Northern Iowa. Their cooperative presentations included a theoretical base for the realities of teaching reading in the 1980s as well as some practical suggestions for the classroom teacher. The involvement experienced by the participants at the conference cannot be recorded in these *Proceedings*; however, the intent to present a written account of the separate sessions seems well fulfilled.

We are pleased that for fourteen years the Annual Reading Conference has been given support from the Department of Elementary and Early Childhood Education, the School of Education, and the Office of Instructional Services and Special Programs at Indiana State University. We trust that you, the reader, will find the *Proceedings* stimulating and, therefore, of value to your teaching. Our efforts in providing the conference will then be justified.

Vanita Gibbs
David Waterman



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READING AND REALITY

PROGRAM OF
FOURTEENTH ANNUAL READING CONFERENCE

THURSDAY, June 14, 1984

9:30 - 11:00 a.m. Hulman Civic Center Meeting Room Complex

Presiding: David C. Waterman, Cochairperson

Welcome: J. Stephen Hazlett, Dean
School of Education

Introduction of Speakers: Vanita Gibbs, Cochairperson

Speakers: David and Sharon Moore

"WHAT GOOD IS COMPREHENSION WITHOUT COMPOSITION"

1:30 - 2:20 p.m.

Room AB - Patty Smith

"The Writing Studio: Children Writing Everyday and
Loving It"

Room C - Louise Clark, Marilyn Klug, and Mary Ann Simbol

"Wellness and Reading: Implications for Instruction"
(Guest appearances by Willie Wellness and Wotten Weader)

Room DE - David Memory

"Improving the Reading Abilities of Limited and Non-English
Speakers"

2:30 - 3:20 p.m.

Room AB - Mark Stoffel

"The Writer, the Reader, and the Illusion of Reality"

Room C - Repeat of 1:30 Session

Room DE - Aldo F. Cardarelli

"Reading Instruction, 1984: A Modest Proposal for Teachers
and Students"

READING AND REALITY: OPENING REMARKS

David C. Waterman

Welcome to our Fourteenth Annual Reading Conference at Indiana State University. I'm very pleased to see you this morning.

Education is an interesting field. I ran across a poem a long time ago that I'd like to share with you. Just the first verse, because if I read the whole poem it will probably take all day. It reminds me a little bit of education today. I'll read the verse and then comment on it. It's called "Some Little Bug."

In these days of indigestion
It is oftentimes a question
As to what to eat and what to leave alone;
For each microbe and bacillus
Has a different way to kill us,
And in time they always claim us for their own.
There are germs of every kind
In any food that you can find
In the market or upon the bill of fare.
Drinking water's just as risky
As the so-called deadly whiskey,
And it's often a mistake to breathe the air.

Some little bug is going to find you some day,
Some little bug will creep behind you some day,
Then he'll send for his bug friends
And all your earthly trouble ends;
Some little bug is going to find you some day.

I could almost substitute some words in there "as to what to eat and what to leave alone." There are so many ways of doing things any more. How do you decide what you're going to teach and how you're going to teach it? If you choose the wrong method, you're dead: You haven't got the right method.

Some time ago Jesse Stuart was here to make a presentation. We teachers have taken a lot of criticism lately, are told we are not doing the right job, we're not using the right methods, we're not getting the right results. It's kind of discouraging. When I get discouraged about teaching, I read the preface to *The Thread That Runs So True* because it says something that is more true than all of the criticisms that I've seen about teaching. Let me share it with you. Stuart wrote:

Eleven years ago when I began writing *The Thread That Runs So True*, I said teaching was the greatest profession in the world. Not too many people agreed with me then, but, as the years have passed, many have changed their minds until they are in full accord with this statement.

When I began teaching, the schoolroom was not supposed to be a very interesting place, and this great profession was looked upon by many as being something of secondary

importance. Now, the interest of all America is focused upon America's schools and their importance to our survival as a nation.

No one can ever tell me that education, rightly directed without propaganda, cannot change the individual, community, county, state, and the world for the better. It can. There must be health, science, technology, the arts, and conservation of all worthwhile things that aid humanity upon this earth. And there must, above all, be character education.

As a teacher in a one-room school, where I taught all eight grades, and then high school, as a principal of rural and city high schools and superintendent of city and county school systems, I learned by experience that teaching is the greatest profession there is, and that the classroom can be made one of the most exciting places on earth for young, middle-aged, and older people to improve themselves for more useful and richer living.

I left teaching, the profession I loved, because I thought I couldn't make enough to live. I raised sheep, lectured, wrote novels and made money, but my heart was always in the schoolroom.

The ten books I wrote before *The Thread That Runs So True* are now out of print, but this book has lived on because it is created of things that are eternal in the destiny of the human race. Each year its sale has gradually increased. I have heard about it from parents of all strata of American life, and from youth and fellow teachers; during the regular school terms I have received on an average ten letters per day from high school and college students.

I am grateful for this great response. These letters affirm my belief that the vast majority of people are essentially the same, that we desire most of all to improve ourselves through learning, books, and contacts with others, that we strive in youth and throughout our lives for continued personal improvement.

One thing I have learned in my contacts with youth and older people as well is that when I am enthusiastic about my teaching, they are enthusiastic. When I am depressed, they seem to be that way too. Their feelings seem to rise as high as my feelings are high or as low as mine are low. Therefore I have tried to be as enthusiastic as I can about any subject I teach.

I have learned, too, to be honest with them and never to try to seem more nearly perfect than I really am. If I make a mistake and one of my students corrects me, I thank him. I know that he will ever be alert from now on to catch me in another mistake. He knows that I'm not infallible and that we are working together as a team in our living and learning. I respect him and his student rights, and he

respects me and my teacher rights. I am slow to condemn him when he fails, and I commend the good he has done if and when he tries.

I know as surely as I live and breathe the positive proof of what education can do for a man. That proof is in this individual. What would I be doing without the education I have? I would not have written this book if I had not had an education. My father and mother with their good untrained minds, their sterling character, would have done greater things in their much too brief lives had they had only eighth grade educations. I wonder what they would have done had each had a high school education? Yes, with college training? But they knew the value of an education because they didn't have it, and therefore they had the good judgment to insist on their children going to school.

Yes, the struggle of a youth to amount to something worthwhile is the greatest objective he can have in life. My parents and my teachers inspired me. They changed my life. And I felt I could repay them by inspiring other youth. This means more to me than all the money in the world.

I am proud that I have been a teacher and am one today. Teaching is something above and beyond teaching lessons and facts from books. It is this but more too. It is helping a youth to find a path of his own that will eventually lead him through fields of frustration and modern pitfalls of destruction until he finds himself.

It is so true that we do not live by bread alone. In any youth who has ever come to school to me I have seen something essentially good, a potential that needs to be developed. It is the teacher's duty to develop this good potential in each young individual. And teachers have done it too. Make no mistake about it. Unfortunately there is no way to measure all the good our teachers have developed in youth.

Once a young high school principal faced an assembly of teachers and administrators and his first words were, "I would not be here before you if it were not for one who is sitting back in your midst. I don't know where I would be."

It was hard for me to restrain the feeling that passed through me. My mind flashed back to his broken home, no one to help him, and how I took him to college, gave him five dollars--all I could spare. I left him stringing beans in the college dining room. He was just one of many. How can any monetary payment ever equal such compliment?

And I am firm in my belief that a teacher lives on and on through his students. I will live if my teaching is inspirational, good, and stands firm for good values and character training. Tell me how can good teaching ever die? Good teaching is forever and the teacher is immortal.



Co-chairperson L. J. Waterman and Dean J. Stephen Hazlett

When I was younger, I could remember anything, whether it had happened or not.

Mark Twain

WELCOMING COMMENTS TO READING CONFERENCE

J. Stephen Hazlett

On behalf of the School of Education and Indiana State University I bid you welcome to the Fourteenth Annual Reading Conference sponsored by the Department of Elementary and Early Childhood Education. It is a pleasure to see so many of you here. I say that not as a ceremonial duty but because it is indeed gratifying to see that the institution continues to accomplish one of its major objectives. Since Indiana State opened its doors in January of 1870, disseminating knowledge, ideas, and information and encouraging students to apply their intelligence to the work of education have been foremost among its goals. Over the years, in its classes and through conferences such as this one, the school has carried on this noble tradition of learning. In coming here today, seeing this assembly, and noting the topics of our guest speakers, as well as those of our own faculty, I am satisfied that the tradition is confirmed. I trust that what the conference offers will be of interest and benefit to you. It may not answer all your questions, but if you leave here with a new way of looking at something in your work--a new hunch, a fuller understanding, or the location of just one more piece in the puzzle of teaching and learning--then the conference will have been a success. Once again, I welcome you to ISU. We are indeed happy that you are with us. May your day be challenging and stimulating, and above all may it benefit you in your continued development as professionals. Thank you.

WHAT GOOD IS COMPREHENSION WITHOUT COMPOSITION?

Sharon Arthur Moore
David W. Moore

Public education currently is receiving a great deal of scrutiny (see, for example, Education Commission of the States, 1983) which educators can view with either alarm or delight. We choose delight. The possibilities for change in public school practice are enormous. If we become defensive and simply deny the allegations being hurled, we only hinder needed reforms.

One allegation about the schools' shortcomings which consistently occurs is that public school students in America have difficulty composing effective responses to what they read. We tend to agree with this finding. Moreover, it is clear to us that one reason students have this difficulty is because students have few opportunities to respond to what they read in a meaningful way during the typical elementary-school day. Basal reader instruction provides little opportunity for students to produce extended responses to what they read. The same limited-response pattern of instruction holds true (and, in fact, seems to be even more pronounced) during the study of the content areas. In addition, the time devoted specifically to writing instruction frequently emphasizes narrow mechanical skills such as spelling, punctuation, and grammar at the expense of broad-based emphases on cogent ideas, presentation of content in logical fashion, and appropriate word choice. For the descriptions of past and present school practices that lead us to these rather grim conclusions about the prevalence of limited-response reading comprehension instruction, see Cuban (1984), Durkin (1978-1979), Leacock (1969), Rosenshine (1981), Sirotnik (1983), and Stake and Easley (1978).

To explain further, when students are asked to answer a set of questions taken from the basal reader manual, the information requested of them typically falls into the "who-what-where-when-how" category. Few "why" questions are asked. And even more rarely are students required to apply their learning to novel or unique situations. Such questioning and responding has its place, to be sure. However, we don't want our baby delivered by a doctor who has merely read a few books on the subject and answered limited-response questions. We want our doctor to have brainstormed possible complications and the treatments that can be used in novel situations. We want our doctor to be able to coherently explain to another health care specialist possible complications so that the specialist clearly understands the situation. True, we are not training all school children to become doctors, but life requires all school graduates to deal with problems that require multiple thinking patterns. Life is not a limited-response task.

It behooves us to take advantage of the spotlight focused on education and to make changes in how students are taught. Now is the time to inform school boards and the public that teachers need support and resources if

Sharon Moore is Professor of Reading and Language Arts, and David Moore is Professor of Curriculum and Instruction, both at the University of Northern Iowa in Cedar Falls.

they are to improve students' abilities to respond thoughtfully to what they read. And this task can be started by articulating the role composition plays in comprehension.

The Role of Composition in Comprehension

At the beginning of this century, James (1925) asserted in a well-known text that there was "no impression without expression"; Petrosky (1982) reasserted this claim recently by stating that "understanding is composing." These assertions share the belief that composing is a large part of the comprehension process. The assertions by James, Petrosky, and others are based on the notion that when people read they create an internal text. This internal text might consist of a few terms from the passage loosely strung together, it might be a bare-bones summary of the reading, or it might consist of an embellished rendition that only approximates the original. Internal texts are the messages readers construct inside their heads as they process printed information.

As was stated, students' purposes for reading a selection typically are to answer the rapid-fire questions they will be asked later, and the person they are reading for typically is the teacher-as-examiner. Since much of the school day is spent this way, American students have gotten very good at creating internal texts which supply quick, accurate answers. However, when asked to explain or justify responses, students have great difficulty. The type of internal text they have learned to create is not conducive to explanations or justifications. Typical internal texts consist of a mere collection of isolated facts.

Attention should be devoted to emphasizing enriched internal texts because internal texts serve at least three functions. Internal texts serve to translate, monitor, and elaborate information. When the composing aspect of comprehension is emphasized, better learning occurs (Emig, 1977; Tierney & Pearson, 1983).

Translating Information

Although many understandings obtained while reading are represented in an internal text, not all understandings are in such form. Many understandings are in non-linguistic form. For example, when reading a cookbook, the cook might "taste" a spice or combination of spices with some part of the mind. When reading directions to assemble something, the builder might "see" the finished product somehow. Language seems at a loss to directly represent sensory impressions. By the same token, the emotional reaction of horror that one experiences while reading a Stephen King novel is real, even though it is not articulated in verbal form. Experiences with reading materials such as cookbooks, blueprints, and horror novels--in fact, experiences with all materials--partly register in non-linguistic ways. When we put words to these sensory or emotional understandings, we *translate* the non-linguistic understanding we have into a linguistic one.

Such translation leads to increased learning because of the active thinking that is produced. Students who articulate their sensory and emotional impressions add precision to their thoughts. They take assorted images and feelings and turn them into ordered sets of information. Of course, linguistic understandings are not the only way to know something,

but such understandings do provide a carefully arranged, stable medium that seems to enhance learning about the world.

Monitoring Information

A second function of an internal text is a *monitoring* function. Good readers check their understanding all the time without even being aware of it. They continually ask themselves, "How am I doing? Am I getting what I need?" When good readers read a book and two pages stick together so that the sentence at the top of the new page doesn't make sense, good readers think something like, "Hold it! Something is wrong here." Good readers guess what caused the sentence to not make sense, albeit unconsciously. Good readers check to see if pages were stuck together or if a word was accidentally inserted or omitted. Good readers, like good writers, keep track of how well their texts are doing, and they identify gaps in those texts. If an unclear part arises, good readers and writers take steps to make it clear.

Monitoring clearly leads to better learning. Students who work to produce an accurate, complete internal text continually monitor how that text is coming along. When breakdowns occur, the reading materials or the reader's prior knowledge is searched in order to fix the problem.

Elaborating Information

Young children know about milk; they drink it all the time. They ask for it, spill glasses of it, and sometimes play with it. Whenever they go shopping, they see jug upon jug of the creamy white liquid; even if children don't make the trip to the store, they see mom or dad unload milk along with all the other groceries. However, many young children do not have a clear understanding of how the milk gets to the grocery store. It is common to have a child tell you, in response to a question about where milk comes from, that milk comes from the store and then be unable to tell how the store got it.

Since children already know what milk is and even some of the various ways that milk can be used, when they read about dairy farms producing milk they already have a good handle on the topic. They can easily flesh out unfamiliar information about a dairy farm because they have clear stable understandings of milk. Children's internal texts about dairy farms become well developed because the children are able to hook up a great deal of known information to the information being presented. Internal texts are like workbenches because readers are able to lay out information from a passage and add in already-known information in order to produce a finished product, a complete understanding of a passage.

A third function of an internal text, then, is to help readers *elaborate*. Good readers elaborate information they encounter by adding what they already know to the new information. Readers who elaborate provide their own examples rather than rely solely upon those, if any, that are provided in the passage. Good readers hook up what they already know with the new information. By connecting the already known to the new, they have an enriched internal text, a fuller understanding of the information in a passage.

Classroom Constraints Limiting an Emphasis on Composition

Predominant teaching practices such as asking questions that call for one-word responses or the selection of one choice among three do not emphasize the composing aspect of comprehension. The question, then, is why don't teachers, despite numerous recommendations, use alternative teaching practices. Why don't more teachers plan comprehension lessons that emphasize the composing aspect of understanding? Two constraints related to the structure of public schooling seem to be especially powerful determinants of teachers' uses of limited-response comprehension tasks. The two constraints are accountability and classroom conditions.

Accountability

The accountability issue is not a twentieth-century invention. As early as the 1840s people were asking perfectly legitimate questions such as "Are the schools delivering?" and "Are administrators and teachers producing?" Through the years a variety of testing approaches used to answer these questions have been implemented. Children, teachers, and school systems are evaluated on the basis of test performance. Efficiently administered and reliably scored, tests are the criterion by which many judgments about the quality of education are made.

The problem with accountability is that teachers tend to emphasize the skills and concepts that are assessed. This emphasis has paid off in one respect. Students today are better able to decode and to grasp factual information than they have ever been. The problem with relying on tests to determine if students are learning to read, however, is that aspects of reading which are difficult to measure are ignored. For instance, fluency, the ability to smoothly and accurately process words, is totally neglected on standardized and most informal tests. The creation of internal texts is also ignored.

Classroom Conditions

A second major constraint holding teachers back from using more composition activities to teach comprehension is the classroom environment, the conditions of the workplace. The number of students in a classroom, the diversity of those students, and the lack of time all lead to teachers' neglecting students' creation of well-developed internal texts when reading. On the other hand, rapid-fire questioning fits classroom conditions.

Limited-response comprehension tasks, rather than broad-based tasks, fit the context of schooling along several dimensions. Teachers feel that one of their major responsibilities is to "cover the content" of the various subjects for which they are responsible. Rapid questions and short responses allow such coverage. Teachers also endeavor to keep all the students engaged in activities and maintain a smooth, yet brisk, flow from one activity to another. Idle students easily become disruptive. Shooting quick questions at many students in a short time serves to engage students' attention.

Teachers work especially hard at socializing students. Past and present teachers expect to produce students who are orderly, punctual, cooperative, industrious, and willing to accept authority. Limited-response activities with clear-cut, authoritative answers lead to such

socialization better than open-ended activities that emphasize students' personal insights. Another reason for maintaining a regular system of limited-response activities is because such a system reduces risk and ambiguity for students. Students don't necessarily want to learn to think; multiple choice is more comfortable because it is a familiar format and because the answer is there, somewhere. In brief, it takes preparation on the part of the teacher, and work and cooperation on the part of the student, when the composing aspect of understanding is emphasized.

Some Comprehension Strategies That Emphasize Composition

In order for any teaching strategy to become part of a teacher's repertoire, he or she must establish routines. Limited-response comprehension activities persist because they are easily routinized by teachers and students. Only a few new decisions are required during these activities, and little planning is needed. The two teaching strategies described here can become part of a classroom routine because of the structure they provide; yet, at the same time, they elicit well-developed internal texts from students.

Content Journals

Content journals consist of writing that is intended to be read by a supportive teacher who comments on and raises questions about the information that is presented (Fulwiler, 1980; Fulwiler, 1982; Yinger & Clark, 1981). In order to maintain content journals, students need a notebook exclusively for journal entries, in which they place the date and time for each entry made. Some teachers require that each entry have a title as well, so a table of contents can be made for the entries. If students are to use journals as a storehouse of information, this strategy makes sense since it enables them to locate the needed information for tests, reports, or class discussions. Students write regularly in their journals about the content of the subject area for which they are keeping the journal. Typically, students are required to make three to five entries per week. The teacher collects the journals several times during the term in order to read at least selected entries and to react in writing to what the students have written. The comments made in the journal should include both positive reactions and suggestions for improvement.

Initially, we have found that even college students need some direction about the types of entries to put into their content journals. Therefore, for the first few weeks of the term, for the five entries per week, assignments are made, such as "Describe how water gets from the roots of the plant to the leaves"; "Is it worth the expense to perfect a system for extracting salt from sea water? Why or why not?"; "Did the other mice in the story think that Frederick was a worker? Why or why not?" Questions of this type and others are asked of the students, and they are to write in response to them. Sometimes they might be asked to keep their textbook closed and write their reactions to a chapter they just finished reading. After several such assignments, students then know the types of writing activities which are appropriate to include in their journals. The amount of each entry is always a sticky wicket. The teacher might ask them to write each entry for five to ten minutes, or he/she might give them a required number of words or lines or pages. Experimentation should indicate which works best.

Content journals are external, rather than internal texts. However, journals promote the construction of internal texts because the external is based on that which is inside.

The Adjective Checklist

A second composition activity to be completed after reading is the adjective checklist. While content journals are appropriate for all types of reading materials, the adjective checklist works best with narrative materials. The teacher provides small groups of students with a group of adjectives describing personality traits and goes over the words with the students. In middle school, terms such as *wise*, *honest*, *selfish*, and *cruel* might be used. (See Figure 1 for an adjective checklist that was used with fifth-grade students.) A short story or poem is provided for the students to read, the character to be described is specified, and after reading, the students mark one (or more than one) adjective as being the most appropriate descriptor. Each small group must reach consensus on the adjectives chosen since a single answer sheet is provided for the group. Additionally, students within the groups must have reasons for choosing certain adjectives over others. Each group orally shares those reasons with the whole class.

ADJECTIVE CHECKLIST

☐ INTELLIGENT	☐ BORING	☐ FRIENDLY
☐ GENUINE	☐ INTERESTING	☐ UNFRIENDLY
☐ STUPID	☐ PHONY	☐ HONEST
☐ BRAVE	☐ GENEROUS	☐ LAZY
☐ RECKLESS	☐ ADAPTABLE	☐ INDEPENDENT

Figure 1. Adjective Checklist used with fifth-grade students.

In preparing an adjective checklist for personality traits, the teacher should brainstorm a list of positive, negative, and neutral attributes. From these lists, innumerable lessons using adjective checklists can be developed. When preparing an individual lesson plan, the teacher would select a story or poem for reading and then go through the lists previously created to select three to five words which clearly describe traits of character, three to five words which may be used to describe the character but which are fairly neutral terms, and three to five words which do not seem to be traits of the character at all. The students' task is to select the most or least descriptive terms and justify their responses.

Alternatively, the teacher can use adjective checklists for students to mark individually. They, then, can orally compare their responses, or they can be required to support their choices in writing, using sections of the story or poem to support their points. Another way to use

adjective checklists is to give each student one which is already marked with three to five adjectives; the student's task is to compose a story wherein a character displays those traits.

Still another way to use the adjective checklist is for the teacher to list on the board names of characters who have been encountered during classroom learning activities. Students list adjectives for one of the characters and, then, leaving character's name off the paper, send the list to another person or group. By looking at the words selected as best descriptors, the individual or group identifies the character described. The students compare and defend responses.

Summary

Readers construct an internal text as they process a passage. This construction of an internal text is an act of composition. As readers construct these texts, they translate, monitor, and elaborate information. These functions promote learning because readers engage in active thinking about the content of what they read. Unfortunately, many prevalent classroom practices de-emphasize the construction of internal texts. Demands for accountability and conditions of the classroom, among other things, limit teachers' abilities to emphasize students' internal texts during reading instruction. Content journals and the adjective checklist are two teaching strategies that respect classroom constraints while emphasizing the composing aspect of reading comprehension.

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Keynote speakers Sharon Arthur Moore and David W. Moore

Every adult needs a child to teach; it's the way adults learn.

F.A. Clark



Speaker Patty Smith

Observation more than books
Experience rather than persons
Are the prime educators.

A.B. Alcott

THE WRITING STUDIO: CHILDREN WRITING EVERY DAY AND LOVING IT

Patty Smith

Teaching writing well is no different from teaching any other subject. The teacher has to know the subject, the process, the children, and the means for the children to become independent learners.

Donald Graves (1983)

At the most recent International Reading Association Conference in Atlanta, Donald Graves, the author of *Writing: Teachers and Children at Work* (1983), pointed out that writing, the teaching of writing, and the relationship of reading to writing were exceptionally well represented as session topics. A year earlier there had been a handful of sessions on writing, this year there were two dozen or more. Is the current interest in teaching writing only another fad in a long line of new math, new social studies, and new science?

Writing as a "hot topic" among educators does seem to be a developing phenomenon; however, there is much more here than fadism. The word *fad* implies lack of value, superficiality, and short-lived interest. I have believed for many years, and many other teachers have too, that teaching children to write with ease is fundamentally important. Few of us do it, however, because to do it well, takes a disproportionate amount of our classroom time. It is the lot of high school composition teachers to cope with mounds of essays and summaries, but we elementary teachers already have more to do than we can handle. If we ask our children to write once a week, we feel we are doing all we can.

And this is probably true. If we do a thorough job of correcting each child's writing effort, go over it with him, have him correct his errors, and then check his work again, it means a lot of time, a lot of frustration because skills seem to grow so slowly, and a lot of negative feelings about writing from the children.

However, there is a new approach to teaching children to write that I would like to present to you today, an approach called the Writing Studio (Graves, 1983).¹ I have found the Writing Studio solves many of the problems connected with children and writing and affords both the children and me great satisfaction. Today I would like to share the Writing Studio with you.

The Writing Studio is an outgrowth of the Writing Process Movement, the movement that began by looking at how professional writers write in the hope of discovering ways to teach writing to youngsters. Frank Smith (1978) earlier applied the process idea to reading. He suggested looking at what successful readers do and then teaching that to less successful readers. One not-so-surprising conclusion he came to was that a child learns to read by reading.

Patty Smith is an elementary teacher at Indiana State University School.

The Writing Process Movement comes to a similar conclusion: Children learn to write by writing a lot. The Writing Process Movement, especially as espoused by Donald Graves, has several other basic positions. It states that the child comes to school believing he can write. We should encourage this self-confidence by "putting the child in control of his writing," a phrase I will discuss more fully later. Each child should be given the time he needs to grow as a writer at his own pace. The Writing Process Movement takes the children seriously as writers, believing that they have worthwhile things to say in their writing and that their writing should have an important, even honored, place in the reading program. And finally, it summarizes the close relationship of reading and writing by saying to teach kids to "read writing and write reading." In other words, children can read other people's writing, but they can also create writing for others to read.

Perhaps it would be instructive now to compare the normal elementary classroom writing program and the Writing Studio. In most classrooms, the teacher assigns the topic for the day's writing. There are many books on the market with clever ideas for these topics. One of the best is *If You're Trying to Teach Kids How to Write, You've Gotta Have This Book* (Frank, 1979). Topics range from the inevitable "What I Did Over Summer Vacation" to flights of fancy and serious statements of opinion on moral questions. I've had some very successful results from assignments like these, and I'm sure you have, too. Good teachers work hard at choosing topics children will enjoy. They work hard at motivating children to want to write on these topics. The essential difference here is that the teacher is choosing the topic.

In the Writing Studio, the child always chooses his own topic. The teacher helps when a child is stuck for a topic; actually other children are usually a bigger help. This is the first way in which the Writing Studio puts the child in control of his own writing. He chooses his own topic and defines its dimensions himself. This frees both the teacher from devising themes and the child from having to produce at a set time on this subject, or else. If I were to ask each of you right now to write a fable, at least one page long, having animal characters and a moral, and due in thirty minutes, you might feel as though I had just announced a pop quiz. If, on the other hand, I were to say: Think of the person you like or love the most, what you like to do in your free time, or the best day you had during the last school year--in other words, if you write about something you know a lot about, you might be more comfortable.

This leads me to the second point I want to make about the Writing Studio. It encourages children to write personal narrative, to write what they know about--their own lives and interests. This, again, puts the child in control. He knows what has happened to him, what he likes to do, what he is interested in, who his friends are; he knows his family, home, toys, trips, pets. There are no hard and fast rules about insisting on personal narrative, however. If a child prefers to write fiction, this is fine. Graves simply believes it is easier for children to write successfully on personal themes. There is a related rule though, and that is that the child assumes the role of expert. The teacher assumes the role of listener and learner when it comes to the content of the child's writing.

A third difference between the normal writing program and the Writing Studio is that it is individualized. One of my greatest frustrations when having a creative writing lesson was the long line of children waiting for

my help at proofreading time. It was like a stack up of airplanes at O'Hare Airport, eager to land, but needing the help of the control tower. The children were lined up, anxious to complete their writing, but needing my help in order to finish. Instead of everyone's writing on the same topic at the same time with the same due date, in the Writing Studio each child is writing on his own topic, at his own rate. Gone is the stack of stories to correct and hand back to be corrected in turn by the children. Gone is the long line of children waiting for your help in proofreading or rechecking their corrections. Since children write at different rates, there are usually only three or four a day who need your help. This means every child usually receives the particular help he needs when he needs it.

In fact, much of the writing that children do never comes under the shadow of the teacher's red pencil. There are two reasons for this. The first is that in the Writing Studio, children write every day, or as close to every day as you can manage. Graves and his associates suggest a minimum of forty-five minutes, three times a week. I try very hard for thirty minutes every day, but I do not always succeed.

The reason for this insistence on daily writing is that Graves believes children learn to write by writing often, by writing without pressure of due dates and deadlines, and by writing with the knowledge that if they're having trouble with an idea or a sentence or paragraph today, there's always tomorrow. Contrary to what you might think, it seems to give children security to know that there'll be time again tomorrow to continue, to finish, or to start a new piece. It removes the pressure to produce on a schedule. The first time a child in my classroom, after seeing that Writing Studio was not on the day's schedule, said with much disappointment in her voice, "You mean we don't get to write today, Mrs. Smith?" I knew I was on to something good!

Of course the result of children's writing every day is that they produce a lot of writing! To me the most basic values of the program are to increase children's writing fluency, to demonstrate to them that getting ideas down on paper isn't all that hard, to erase "fear of writing." As they see their writing papers build up in their writing folders, it is striking and ample evidence that they can indeed write.

But I said earlier that those piles of papers to check were a thing of the past. This leads me to the second reason why the teacher's red pencil never comes near much of the children's writing: publishing. Publishing the children's writing is an integral part of the Writing Studio. It means a lot of work for children and teachers, but the rewards far outweigh the trouble.

By publishing the children's writing I mean putting it between permanent covers in a form presentable enough for anyone to read. Every piece a child writes is not published. Only the ones he judges to be instructive or interesting enough that other people will want to read them--a lot like the criteria professional publishing houses use. The professional author does not publish every word he writes. He chooses only his best to go to his publisher. On these he spends a great deal of time polishing, rewriting, improving; and his editor does the same. In this same vein only the pieces the child chooses to publish are revised, edited, proofread, corrected, illustrated, and copied over. Again, since children write at different rates, not everyone in the classroom is at this teacher-time-intensive stage at the same time.

The promise of publishing also means that the child is no longer writing for an audience of one: the teacher. Many other people, children and adults, will be reading his work. He wants his audience to like and be interested in what they read. He also wants his audience to be able to decipher what they read.

This is where the teacher and his teaching of writing skills comes into the scheme of things. Children can see a reason for following the conventions of written English if they know other people are going to be reading their work. Professionally published books have certain standards, follow certain conventions which make written English easier to read; children, especially from third grade on, can recognize and learn to follow the same standards. The publishing child author is more receptive to the importance of capitals, punctuation marks, paragraphs, spelling, and so on, because there is a purpose for them: They are a courtesy to his readers.

No miracles occur. Children do not suddenly start rushing to the dictionary to find out how to spell a word correctly; they do not miraculously remember their capitals and punctuation marks. It is still a slow business, but there is more apparent purpose to the process. It makes more sense.

A third point I would like to make about publishing is that it confers status on the author. This is because the children's published words are accorded the same respect by the teacher as are the professionally published books in the classroom. I read them aloud at story time just as I read a famous old folktale or fairy tale. When a new book arrives in my classroom it is displayed for a few days in the chalktray at the front of the class where everyone can see it and has a chance to read it. New child-authored books share this place of honor right beside Maurice Sendak and William Steig. You probably don't have much trouble guessing which books receive the most attention from the children and are read the most--the ones their friends have written.

Let us move now to a more detailed discussion of the teacher's role in the Writing Studio. I have mentioned briefly that Donald Graves believes that the teacher, in order to teach writing, should be a writer, too. Many of the classroom teachers who have worked closely with him have indeed published articles, and he encourages all teachers to do this. The main purpose of his urgings, though, is to help the teacher better understand the process he is asking children to experience. A teacher who is writing along with his class has a much clearer concept of each step that the child is going through from topic selection through lead writing to the "cleaning up" jobs of editing, proofreading, and correcting. A teacher who is writing along with his children gives the process more weight and significance in the children's eyes. Write with your children. Write pieces they would like to read--about your family, pets, and experiences (especially embarrassing ones from your childhood). Nancie Atwell (1984), one of Donald Graves' associates and an eight-grade teacher, suggests also writing letters, memos, lesson plans, and lists. Let the children see what a lot of writing you need to do in your everyday life.

The most important aspect, the heart of the teacher's role in the Writing Studio, is the writing conference. These are one-on-one conferences, held usually, but not always, at the child's request. Nancie Atwell suggests starting each Writing Studio session with very brief, thirty-to forty-five-second conferences in which you zigzag your way around the

room asking each child briefly to tell you how his writing is going. You are checking on content only, to reinforce your interest in what he's writing about and to make sure you are aware if he needs help. This is a simple but important "touching base" process.

If a child needs further help you have a lengthier conference, approximately ten minutes. There are many reasons why a child may need such a conference. First, he may be stuck for a topic. This happens less frequently than you would imagine. For an individual child, a short conversation about friends, family, or what they've been doing recently usually uncovers several possible topics. Last spring, I had several children simultaneously stuck for a topic, so we had a second class brainstorming session of a half-hour or so in which the children came up with at least thirty ideas. There were literally no more topic problems for the remainder of the year.

A second type of conference, when a child has started writing but gets stuck, is called the "I don't know what else to say" conference. If the child reads his story to you and then you read it back to him, he often hears his own gaps and omissions and can proceed without further help. If this simple listening does not help, then the teacher asks questions about the content of the story to help the child to elaborate on what he already has written or to add more. Some question examples include: I can tell you really like to play baseball; what is the best part of playing? Do you play on a team? What is its name? What position do you most like to play? The "I don't know what else to say" conference usually means a child is dissatisfied with what he has written, knows it could be better, and is asking for help in improving the content. When a child truly has nothing left to say, he usually stops writing that piece and begins another.

A third type of conference is an affirmation or sharing conference. The child simply wants you to see all he's been doing and to get a pat on the back for it. These are fun and often afford a chance to encourage a child to go back to a finished piece and think about publishing it.

A fourth conference is the publishing conference. This occurs when a child has a piece he has decided is good enough to publish. This is his decision though he may need a little encouragement, even pushing the first time. He has to do the work involved--the revising, editing, copying over, making the title page, drawing the illustrations, and so on. The teacher's role here is manifold: editor, final proofreader, book-binder, and helper. I ask the child to do all the proofreading and correcting he can and then ask a friend to do the same. When it's my turn, I can concentrate on one or two skills with which the child needs help. I do not try to emphasize more than these one or two, though I do help him correct other errors, because the thrust of the publishing process is preparing a book so that it is as readable and attractive as it can be made for its readers.

To illustrate by example, I show the child a line where an error occurs and ask him to find it. If he can, he corrects it, or I may show him how. If he can't find it, I ask leading questions until he can and then he corrects it. However, if a child needs quotation marks and he's still struggling with writing a decent sentence, I ignore the quotation marks. In other words, I try to do what each of us is always trying to do: teach the child at his own level of understanding and achievement. The individualized aspect of this program lends itself beautifully to this

goal. I believe this process holds the child's frustration with teacher's red marks all over his paper to a minimum.

Donald Graves suggests group conferences, which he calls "clusters of concern," as a means of increasing the number of children with whom you have extended contact during each writing period. These may be groups of children who all have the same skills needs, or they may simply be groups of five or six children who meet regularly to share their writing with each other. There could be a Monday group, a Tuesday group, and so on. Here the teacher has a chance to encourage the positive listening skills I will mention later. With the teacher's guidance they can learn how to help each other with such things as title selection, proofreading, and even elaboration. Graves believes that as the year progresses, children should increasingly be helping children, that they can learn how to ask leading questions, how to help someone find a topic, how to proofread. This does not make for a quiet classroom, but it does help skills to grow.

I would like to make two final points in regard to the teacher's role in the Writing Studio. The first is trust. One of our main purposes in teaching children is to help them become independent learners. For them to do this, they need confidence in their own abilities to think and to produce satisfactory work. If you show interest in what they have to say in their writing, positively give them control over the subject and dimensions of their writing, and exhibit an attitude of helpfulness instead of consternation at skills teaching time, you will build a relationship of trust. Then, by midyear, you can be more directive, more critical in your guidance, and they will accept it as advice from a friend who wants their writing to be the best it can be.

The second point I want to make about the teacher's role is one that Graves (1984) emphasizes. Although the stated purpose of the Writing Studio is to give children control of their own writing, it is the *teacher* who is in charge of the writing program and who is responsible for its success or failure. Therefore Graves says not to let orthodoxies creep into any program you are teaching, Writing Studio or other. If something does not work for you, adapt it or throw it out, but do not treat it as a sacred cow.

Let us move now to some ideas concerning how you might establish a writing process program in your classroom. Imagine that it is the first day of school. You would like to start your writing program today because you know that children like to do "real work" on the first day of school. You want to let them know right away that they'll be doing a lot of writing during the year. This is the way I would go about it.

Introduce the basic ideas to them; perhaps read something you have written that is simple but interesting. Be sure to emphasize these things:

1. They will be writing every day, or nearly every day.
2. They will be choosing what they want to write about.
3. They will be writing at their own pace.
4. They will be able to publish their best writing in books and these books will become part of the class library for everyone to read.

5. They'll be working mostly on their own, but you'll help them whenever they need you.
6. You will be wanting them to help each other too as soon as they are able.

Now it is time to give them each a manilla folder. If they are second graders or above, they can set up their own folders. The more they do for themselves, the more ownership they will feel for the whole process. On the front cover they will write "Things I Have Written About" and make some ruled lines, on which they will later record the titles of their finished pieces. On the two inside covers they write "Things I Might Write About" and "Things I Know a Lot About" and make more ruled lines for recording their ideas for writing topics. On the back cover they write "Skills I (Almost) Always Use" and again make ruled lines for you to record their skills progress. Be sure to make a folder for yourself too, or use one you've already made for yourself as a model.

Now that the children have made their folders and have an idea of what they'll be doing, it is time to discuss topics briefly. Then let each child sit quietly and write on the two inside cover spaces some possible topics and a list of things they know a lot about. Do this yourself, right along with the children. After five minutes or so, have everyone share ideas. Share yours, too. As they tell their specific ideas, you generalize them into categories like family, pets, and hobbies and write them on the chalkboard. Make this time into a brainstorming session. Encourage children to write down new ideas in their folders as they think of them. You will be amazed at how many ideas come out. Be sure to express much enthusiasm and anticipation about the topics they mention. Then give them another few minutes to write down further ideas.

New topics will occur to the children during a normal school day; encourage them to write these down when they think of them. Point out possible topics during sharing time or during a special or funny moment in class; soon the children will be doing the same. As my third graders began to see themselves as writers, we heard many enthusiastic suggestions, such as, "Mrs. Smith! Brenda (or whoever) should write about that. That'd make a good story!"

One of our best and most popular books of the year was "The Day I Almost Fainted" by Brenda. We were studying cells and were visiting a ninth-grade biology class to see some student demonstrations. At one of the demonstration centers were two boys making microscope slides of their own blood which my third graders could then view to see blood cells. This is what she wrote.

The day I almost fainted I was in Mr. Mooney's room and this boy, well actually there were two boys, but one of them was going to poke his finger with a little knife. He had Larry do it. (Larry is a boy in my class.) Well, the boy who stuck his finger, after he stuck his finger, he started to squeeze his finger and blood came out.

My face started to get white. My stomach started to hurt and I started to get dizzy. I had a bad time! Mr. Smith, (my teacher) had to pick me up and take me to the nurse. I stayed about thirty minutes.

When I came back they were still at Mr. Mooney's in line. Somebody asked, "Where is Brenda?" and there I came! When I got in line it seemed like I was being loved.

And when we got downstairs Mrs. Smith asked me to tell how I felt so I told them. After I got done Zach (a boy in my class) said, "I can't believe this!" But it happened! After I stopped talking I got so excited my heart started beating fast and I could not stop thinking about it.

I'm sure you'll agree that this story is full of freshness and feeling. This was a real experience which caused strong feelings in Brenda, and she was able to express them well.

Here is a story of a more harrowing experience. Larry does not have Brenda's skills, but the truth of his experience comes through in his simple sentences.

I got hit by a trash truck. I fell in a mud puddle. I got blood all over me and I went to the hospital.

I was eight years old. It was 9:00 o'clock. It was 6:00 o'clock when I got out. My Dad was scared. When my Dad said what time it is, I said it was 9:00 o'clock. My eyes were seeing things upside down because I got hit by a trash truck.

Once the children have chosen a few topics for themselves, it's time to write! Start with a short time, say ten minutes, and lengthen it when they are capable of using more time. The first few times they write, you might write along with them. In this way they can see that you have to stop and think, erase, and really concentrate when you write, too. I found this behavior modeling to be an excellent technique for getting across the message that writing was what we were doing, we were serious about it, and I expected everyone to write. As soon as the children started to need conferences, however, my Writing Studio days came to a halt. From about the second week on, they'll be wanting your help.

After writing is over for the day, use a sharing time to begin to teach the children how to "receive" each other's work, how to become positive but thinking listeners. Model the behavior by first reflecting back to the sharing pupil what you have heard, for example, "You went on a trip, had fun, and fell asleep on the way home." If the child intended to say more, but the remainder is still in his head, it may come out verbally now. You can suggest, then, that he add this information to his story. Leading questions that will help bring out more information include: What did you do that was fun? How did you feel when you woke up and were already home?

Enthusiastic comments about good writing you hear will show the class what you think is good. The children will soon see that you expect positive reactions and questions that bring out content. They will all be experiencing the same kinds of problems in their writing, so they will be able to hear well what you are saying. They will gradually try the new things they hear you compliment in their peer's writing.

They will also learn from the writing of professional authors that you read to them as often as possible. I think beginning a writing period

by listening to some good writing is very appropriate. That writing may be by a professional or by a child. Since the children's work is treated the same as the professional's, the children learn how to be careful listeners to both kinds of writing. Ellen Blackburn (1984) showed how her first graders began to use words and moods in their own writing which they had heard in professionally published books. She called it "borrowing words." These children truly see themselves as writers.

Evaluation and grading of children's, especially young children's, creative writing are always terrible problems for teachers. How can you put a *D* or an *F* on children's work when they put so much of themselves into it? I simply don't. I record on the back of their folder the growth of their technical skills. I insist that they keep all their writing papers, whether finished or not, in their folder so that I can see everything they've done during the semester. Thus, I evaluate in black and white only their skills progress. All other evaluation is verbal and as affirmative as possible. Nancie Atwell (1984) suggested that even with older writers, effort and improvement rather than perfection of expression should enter heavily into the grading process.

I hope I have been able to communicate to you the enthusiasm I feel for the Writing Studio. It solved so many of the frustrations I used to feel about teaching writing to children. It opened up a whole area of closer communication between my pupils and me and among the pupils themselves. I know them so much better through their writing. It gives me a great deal of satisfaction to see their fear of writing evaporate and to see their fluency, powers of expression, and technical skills grow. And, finally, the look of pride on their faces when they produce books, books which other children and adults really want to read, makes me almost as proud as they are.

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WELLNESS AND READING: IMPLICATIONS FOR INSTRUCTION

Mary Ann Simbol, Marilyn Klug, and Louise Clark

This presentation views the concept of wellness and reading from the points of view of a professor interested in the area of wellness and education, a classroom teacher, and an instructional materials specialist. Following the puppet play which begins the presentation are segments on wellness activities, wellness materials, and wellness research.

Willie Wellness and Wotten Weader

Narrator: Good afternoon. We are pleased to have the opportunity to share with you our thoughts concerning wellness and reading. Our presentation shares our personal as well as professional concerns.

With the emphasis on back-to-basics, we believe there is one basic that has been forgotten--a healthy child makes a healthy, achieving student.

We begin our presentation with a puppetry play. Please join us as we meet Willie Wellness and Wotten Weader. Willie Wellness knows all about nutrition, exercise, and relaxation. He practices holistic health every day. Wotten Weader eats only foods he likes the best. He is a sweets craver and a junk-a-hoic. He does not exercise or get his proper rest because he likes to watch the late TV shows.

We would now like for you to meet Miss Sunny, a third-grade teacher at Honeywell Elementary School. As we begin, the two boys are talking with Miss Sunny during the lunch break.

Sunny: Good afternoon. My students, Willie and Wotten, are anxious to meet you. Please welcome Willie Wellness (Willie enters) and Wotten Weader (Wotten enters). Boys, remember when I took a survey of the class' eating habits?

Willie: Yes, you passed out a questionnaire which asked us our favorite snack foods.

Sunny: Well, boys, you know that high on the list of snack foods were cookies, soda pop, and candy. I knew my students consume too much sugar and foods with additives and preservatives.

Wotten: Yeah! I love to eat Snickers and chocolate chip cookies, and my favorite drink is Coke. Yum, yum!

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Willie: Now listen to me Wotten Weader. You should not eat that much sugar. Sugar causes tooth decay, overweight kids, and stomach-aches. The other day I read in a magazine that we get at home that all Americans eat too much sugar.

Wotten: So what! I love sugar. I crave sweets. A little won't hurt you.

Willie: You think you eat a little but when you add it all together you'd be surprised how much you take in.

Sunny: I read that sugar and salt eaten in excess are harmful. Refined sugar is lacking in vitamins, minerals, and other important nutrients. The junk foods just give us empty calories. They make us feel full so we don't eat the fresh fruits and vegetables and get our daily required vitamins and minerals.

Willie: That's right, Miss Sunny. Wotten Weader, what did you have for your snack food yesterday and your breakfast this morning?

Wotten: I love to raid the kitchen after school. Mom always has donuts, Oreo or chocolate chip cookies, and my favorite--Coke. This morning I had a bowl of Lucky Charms (sometimes it's Fruit Loops), white toast with cinnamon and sugar topping, and a glass of Tang. It gives me that get-up-and-go power.

Sunny: Wotten Weader, have you ever read the list of ingredients on a box of Lucky Charms or Fruit Loops?

Wotten: No, why should I do that?

Sunny: Well, I just happen to have a box of Fruit Loops that I was going to use as a reading lesson. Let's see: flours, sugar, vegetable oil, salt, artificial flavoring and coloring. The ingredients are listed in the order of the amount that the cereal contains. For instance, if sugar is listed second, then that means there is a high quantity of sugar in the cereal. Salt is listed fourth.

Willie: Wotten Weader, did you add sugar to your cereal?

Wotten: Of course, I always do. Makes it taste better.

Sunny: Boys, I'd also like to share with you the ingredients on a jar of Tang. Sugar is listed first! Also listed are artificial flavor, artificial color, and preservatives. Fresh oranges, orange juice, or frozen orange juice are the best and have the important vitamins and minerals. Whole wheat bread is much more nutritious than white bread. Anything that is refined and processed loses its valuable nutrients.

Wotten: Is that so? I didn't know that. Let's check out my lunch since you're getting so picky. I had a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, Kool-Aid, potato chips, and my favorite Twinkies. I pack my lunch because I don't like the cafeteria lunches. Then I can have just what I like best.

Willie: What a lunch! The bread should be nutritious whole wheat. Peanut butter is good for you, but most commercial peanut butters are loaded with lots of salt and sugar. The potato chips contain too

much fat and salt, and, of course, Twinkies and most jellies, besides being mostly sugar and artificial flavors, contain preservatives. By the way, how do you make Kool-Aid?

Wotten: Oh, Mom showed me. It's easy: just a package of Kool-Aid, two cups of sugar, and a quart of water. Easy, huh?

Sunny: Easy does it, but our easy, instant packaged foods are the ones full of additives and preservatives, artificial flavoring and coloring. In the days before instant puddings and gelatins, people picked their vitamins in their natural form off bushes and trees, dug them up from the ground, and fished them out of the seas. Menus were simple. People hunted game, planted grains, and gathered what fruits and vegetables grew wild where they lived. Food was in its natural state. Today we go to the big supermarkets and buy canned and packaged foods with chemicals added to keep them from spoiling and to improve flavor and coloring.

Willie: Yes, and they add sugar and salt to improve the flavor, too. We get lots of sugar and salt without even knowing it.

Wotten: But I like potato chips and jelly and Twinkies. I love sugary, gooey desserts.

Sunny: Wotten Weader, you eat the typical munchies that most of my children eat and, now that I think about it, that might be the reason a lot of the children are hyperactive and have difficulty concentrating and finishing their work. If we eat right we feel calm, relaxed, and ready to learn.

Willie: My mother was reading an article from a health magazine the other day, and she was telling me that the artificial foods and chemicals of today may cause children to be hyperactive, have poor concentration, and feel low in energy one minute and high the next. She said food makes a difference in how we feel. Many foods provide calories but supply no vitamins, minerals, or proteins.

Wotten: Oh, you two are making me feel like I'm eating all the wrong things. Sugar in this, sugar in that, too much salt, artificial flavoring and coloring, pooh! I am feeling low.

Sunny: Oh, don't feel bad, Wotten Weader. I'm going to use my survey and begin from the needs of my children to write a nutritional study unit. We'll all learn together.

Willie: Good idea. My mom knows a lot about nutrition, and she reads a lot of health magazines. I'm sure she will share them with us. She could come over and talk to us 'cause she knows a lot.

Sunny: We can read recipes, write our own, and actually make nutritious snacks at school.

Willie: That's a good idea.

Wotten: Yeah! Snacks in the classroom. I love parties--Kool Aid, cookies, ice cream, candy. Halloween is my favorite time. And at Easter I get a whole basket full of goodies.

Willie: Oh no, Wotten Weader, that's not what Miss Sunny is trying to tell us. We should have healthy, nutritious snacks like raisins, sunflower seeds, carrots, and apples and other fruits. You know, fruit has natural sweetener so we don't have to add sugar to our diet.

Sunny: Yes, I can tell when children have eaten too much sugar, especially at Halloween and Easter time. They are extremely hyperactive and their temperaments fluctuate from sweet and friendly to cantankerous and impulsive. Now, let's see . . . example, yes, I can set an example by eating good, nutritious foods myself and explaining what I eat and why. Then the class will want to taste . . . yes, a tasting party. Even if some say they don't like something, it is good to encourage them to take a little taste from time to time.

Wotten: That's how I learned to like cottage cheese and avocados. I'd like to try raw carrots and sunflower seeds, but . . . just a little.

Willie: By setting an example and giving them samples . . . and many of us can bring in some favorite nutritious snacks; the class will learn what good munchies are. Moms and dads will soon listen and begin buying the better foods.

Wotten: I don't think my mom and dad would listen.

Willie: I have an idea! Miss Sunny, could we put on a puppet show about being healthy? Would your mom and dad come, Wotten?

Wotten: Maybe so! They watch the Muppets with me.

Sunny: Yes, we could do it for parents' night. I'll make charts showing good nutritious foods and each day I'll mark the children's names with stars beside the foods they have eaten for their munchies after school and between meals. We can keep charts on their breakfasts, too.

Wotten: Oh, I know a good breakfast is important for that get-up-and-go power, like putting gas in your car. Hey, how 'bout a recipe book. If I know how to make yummy snacks, I'll use the book to make some without sugar--if you think I should. I'm always hungry, so maybe I can get used to eating sunflower sandwiches with sprouts. Ohhh. . . .

Willie: Cheer up, Wotten Weader, try this scrumptious, gooey snack: whole wheat bread with natural peanut butter, raisins, and bananas. If you want it sweeter, add a little honey. Yum, I think I'll go fix one after school.

Wotten: Yeah, that sounds better than the donut I was saving for after school.

Sunny: Now you're talking! And, I'll join you for a snack after school. Boys, you know we've been talking a lot about nutrition, but just as important to good health is exercise. There are fast exercises that we call cardio-vascular exercises which really get the heart pumping and increase circulation. There are the stretch exercises which put muscle tone into all muscles of the body.

Wotten: I like to watch TV. My favorite programs come on after school, so I watch them while I snack. Then Mom has dinner for the family, and after that I do my schoolwork. Then it is bedtime. No time for silly exercises.

Willie: Wotten Weader, you do not get enough exercise; I can tell by your poor posture and your slow ways. You are always tired. Look at you: Your shirt is buttoned crooked and your shoes are on the wrong feet. Did you watch the late show on TV last night? Exercise stimulates not only your body but your mind. You will be able to do better in every class if you eat nutritiously and exercise every day. Come on, we'll show you some great exercises.

Wotten: Oh no, not now, I'm too tired. Besides, my leg aches.

Willie: You won't feel tired when we finish with you. Up and at 'em.

Sunny: (To the audience) Come on--everyone up. We will do some exercises to the tape *Chicken Fat*.

(Time for exercises with the audience)

Whew! I feel great! How about you boys?

Wotten: Wow, I liked that. My legs don't ache. I feel ener . . . ener . . . energet Oh, I mean I've come alive!

Willie: You should exercise every day or walk a mile at least four times a week.

Wotten: You know, I think I'll try to eat better and exercise. But I want to know one thing. Sometimes I feel wiggly, jiggly, like I have a motor running inside of me. What can I do to be more relaxed?

Willie: Your diet will help that feeling. But, Miss Sunny, do you know anything about relaxation techniques? My mom says to us kids, "Now don't bother me for fifteen minutes; I am going to meditate." Do you do that? You always seem so calm.

Sunny: Yes, I practice meditation or relaxation twice a day. Believe me, I couldn't get through the day if I didn't. I will include that in my nutrition lesson plans to teach the children, too.

Wotten: Well, you've given me the word on everything else, I may as well get this, too. If I listen to you, I'll be so healthy my grades will get better and Mom and Dad will be so proud of me. Come on, how do I get slowed down.

Sunny: I have a tape that I'll play. Willie, will you help us get started?

Willie: Sure. Now, sit loose and easy with your heavy arms hanging down at your sides. All the weight in your heavy legs and arms is slowly trickling out like sand from your fingertips and toes till you're light as a floating cloud. Drop your chin on your chest like Raggedy Ann. Lift your head and draw a circle on the ceiling

with your nose. Drop your head, close your eyes, put your hands in your lap, and get ready to breathe in to 4 counts and out to 4 counts. Ready. Go.

Breathe in - 2 - 3 - 4

Breathe out - 2 - 3 - 4

Breathe in - 2 - 3 - 4

Breathe out - 2 - 3 - 4

Breathe in - 2 - 3 - 4

Breathe out - 2 - 3 - 4

Now let your imagination lead you to another world as you listen to this.

(Plays relaxation music with narration.)

How do you feel now, Wotten Weader?

Wotten: I feel great! No more running around inside of me.

Willie and Wotten: Thanks, Miss Sunny.

Sunny: Good, we'll just have a good time in the next couple of months working on our wellness unit, doing exercises, and eating nutritious foods.

(Puppets disappear)

Narrator: Now that you are relaxed, we would like to move from this fictional portrayal of a classroom situation to practical reading-related activities used by Marilyn Klug with second- and third-grade reading students at DeVaney Elementary School in Terre Haute.

Wellness Activities

A personal interest in the total state of well-being and a concern about her students' poor attention span, poor reading abilities, and poor eating habits gave Marilyn, a Chapter I Reading teacher, reason to develop a unit on wellness. Her general objective was to teach reading through wellness activities. Her specific objectives were to develop the disposition to read, to improve reading skills, and to develop a wellness consciousness.

She began her unit on wellness by assessing the students' eating habits. The survey showed that the students frequently ate sugar-filled snack foods. The breakfast survey showed that sugar-coated cereals and sugar-filled sweets were most often eaten by 17 of the 27 students. Four students had had no breakfast at all. The remaining students ate a more nutritionally sound breakfast of juice and egg or non-sugar-coated cereal.

What follows is a summary of her learning activities during the unit on wellness. Many of the activities were interdisciplinary in nature. Also included are other possible activities concerning wellness.

Learning Activity 1: Snacks and Munchies

Make a bulletin board entitled "Parade of the Good Munchies" with pictures from the Dairy Council and other sources of good nutritious

snack foods. Give the foods character by adding arms and legs and having them parade along. Discuss why some snack foods are better than others.

Have the children make charts showing nutritious munchies that would be good to eat after school, between meals, and at bedtime. Have the children note each day on their charts the nutritious snacks they have eaten by putting a star beside their names. Encourage them to ask their parents to buy more nutritious snacks such as raisins, sunflower seeds, and whole wheat bread.

Other activities on this theme include having tasting parties to experience new foods, making recipe books with nutritious and easy-to-fix foods, discussing good dental health, making fruit kabobs, and making a book of the best snack foods.

Learning Activity 2: Growing Sprouts

Grow alfalfa sprouts by using a quart jar covered with cheesecloth held tight with a rubber band. Soak the beans or seeds overnight, drain and put them in the quart jar, then turn them upside down in a dish to continue draining. Rinse the sprouts twice a day and leave them upside down to drain in a dark place. In 3 to 5 days the sprouts will be ready for the class to try. They can eat them from the sprout-growing jar or put them in salads or in their sandwiches.

Have the children read about sprouts in books on health and in the encyclopedia to learn about their nutritional value. Have them make booklets showing the growing process of sprouts and telling something about their nutritional value.

Other sprouts and plants which may be grown in the classroom include lentils, soybeans, mung beans, wheat berries, lettuce, carrots, and radishes.

Learning Activity 3: Apples

Apples can be used as reading motivation, a source of nutrition, and art pieces. Read the story of Johnny Appleseed. Discuss it and act it out. Have the children make their own book about Johnny Appleseed for the classroom. Read about the nutritional content of apples and discuss the adage "an apple a day keeps the doctor away."

Have the children make applesauce and taste it to see if the natural sweetness is satisfying; if not, it may be sweetened with honey. Serve apple quarters and raisins for good snack foods. Make Waldorf salad using apples, grapes, celery, and raisins with a little yogurt or mayonnaise. Reading a recipe becomes an easier task for children when they know they can eat the product.

Cut an apple in half crosswise and remove the seeds. Notice that a star is formed. Make apple prints using the natural design in the apple by pressing the flat surface on a paper towel to absorb excess moisture, dipping the apple in tempera paint mixed to the consistency of thick cream, and pressing the design on paper. Use the printed paper to make a cover for a recipe book.

Other activities might include creating an apple mural for the classroom depicting the apple from orchard to applesauce, and saving apple seeds to graph the number of seeds in each apple or to plant in small milk cartons or peat pots.

Learning Activity 4: Halloween and Pumpkins

Halloween provides an excellent time to talk about pumpkins and pumpkin seeds. With teacher supervision the students can carve a jack-o-lantern. The pulp can be cooked to make pumpkin bread, cookies, or pies, using honey to sweeten. The seeds can be cleaned, dried for a few days, and toasted on a cookie sheet (use a small amount of safflower oil to grease the pan). As the children eat the roasted seeds, pumpkin bread, or cookies, read to them from the label of a can of pumpkin and have them decide which is better for them--the canned pumpkin or the fresh pulp.

Have each child, or the entire class working together, make a booklet showing the steps in carving a jack-o-lantern, ways to use the cooked pumpkin pulp, and how to dry and roast the seeds.

Encourage nutritious Halloween treats, such as popcorn (with no salt), raisins (in small plastic bags or boxes), sunflower seeds, carob chips, carob chip cookies (made with honey and whole wheat flour), No-Bake cookies (using peanut butter, carob, and honey), sesame sticks, and apple juice.

Learning Activity 5: Peanuts

Discuss how and where peanuts are grown and their many uses. Grow a peanut plant in the classroom. Discuss George Washington Carver and the many uses he found for the peanut. Make peanut butter by putting 2 tablespoons of oil and 1 cup of unsalted dry-roasted peanuts in a blender and blending for a few minutes. The peanut butter will be crunchy. Read the label on a jar of commercial peanut butter. Discuss the sugar and other ingredients which have been added.

Learning Activity 6: Nutritional Recipes

Make popcorn in the classroom. Eat it without salt. Help children develop a taste for less salt. Have the students do research in the library on popcorn and help them realize that popcorn is one of the most nutritious snack foods.

Make snacks such as crispy-rice squares using honey instead of marshmallows. Make this recipe for No-Bake cookies, a delicious, nutritious candy:

Mix 2/3 cup honey, 1/3 cup carob powder, 1/2 cup milk, and 1 stick butter in a pan and boil 1 to 1 1/2 minutes. Add 1/2 teaspoon vanilla and 1/2 cup peanut butter; stir until peanut butter melts and is mixed. Add 3 cups old-fashioned oats. Drop by spoonfuls onto waxed paper and cool. Coconut may be added.

After tasting a variety of nutritional foods, the children can make a recipe book consisting of their own recipes and other nutritional recipes they find in books. The children can then read and prepare some of the recipes written by their peers.

By having fun, they may not even realize they are working, and reading and writing can have a purpose and be enjoyable. Reading and following recipes helps children to sequence ideas, follow directions, comprehend what they read, and learn new vocabulary.

Learning Activity 7: Basic Four Food Groups

Make a "Food Model" of the Basic Four Food Groups by dividing a 36" by 36" posterboard into fourths and labeling each section. Make a circle in the center and label it "Combination." Have the children bring in pictures of food from magazines. They must decide in which section their food belongs, and the class can discuss any disagreement. Plan a tasting party for each of the basic four food groups.

Some foods, such as pizza, may contain all four food groups. They may be placed in the center area labeled "Combination" or on a separate posterboard labeled "Foods From All Four Groups." Foods not included in the basic four food groups which provide few nutrients except carbohydrates and fats are called "Others." Make a classification on another sheet of posterboard for these.

Make a poster or a collage that can be added to each day. Label it "Empty Calories," and place most desserts, colas, coffee, candies, and the like on it. Make a mobile using small food packages showing the four food groups.

Make a game to check the students' knowledge of the basic food groups. Divide a game board into four sections. Put a circle in the middle labeled "Combination" for pizzas, casseroles, etc. Laminate several pictures of foods cut out from magazines. Students are to place the pictures in the correct sections. Be sure to include some non-nutritious foods so they have to decide whether the picture represents a basic food or "empty calories." Non-nutritious foods go in the "Dump Pile."

Another fun activity that children love to play will increase vocabulary and reinforce the study of the four food groups. Five word cards (4" x 8") with yarn to tie around the neck are worn by five students. These cards are labeled "Meat Group," "Milk Group," "Bread Group," "Fruit/Vegetable Group," and "Combination." At least twenty word cards with names of foods from the five groups written on them are made. When the teacher shows a card with a food such as broccoli, one student reads the word, says it, and throws a bean bag to the student representing the proper group (in the case of broccoli, to the student wearing the "Fruit/Vegetable Group" card). That person in turn reads another word and throws the bean bag to the student representing that respective food group.

Learning Activity 8: Good Breakfasts

Create a mobile depicting a well-balanced breakfast. Using yarn, attach an egg carton, a box of shredded wheat cereal, a carton of 2% milk, a whole-wheat bread wrapper stuffed with paper, and a can of unsweetened, frozen orange-juice concentrate to 2 wire hangers.

Discuss the importance of a good breakfast and what constitutes a nutritious breakfast. Emphasize that it should provide one-fourth to one-third of the daily needs for protein, calories, vitamins, and minerals.

Using a clock, count the hours the body has been without food. Stress that breakfast is the most important meal of the day because it follows the longest period that the body has been without food. Have the children paste pictures of or draw good breakfasts on paper plates. These can be hung on the wall.

Have the children bring in their empty cereal boxes and read the labels. Discuss the sugar-coated cereals and why they are not the best for them. List cereals which are low in sugar and salt. Discuss high and low blood-sugar levels and why eating high amounts of sugar for breakfast is not good. Show how the blood-sugar level rises right after eating a high-sugar food, resulting in hyperactivity and restlessness, and falls after two or three hours, resulting in slowness, inattention, and drowsiness.

Learning Activity 9: Label Reading

Have the children bring in empty food packages. Have them read the labels and compare the ingredients. Discuss which food items are nutritionally better and why. This also adds new words to their vocabulary.

Discuss what additives, preservatives, and artificial coloring and flavorings are. Find out what BHA, BHT, nitrates, sodium, monosodium glutamate, and other additives and preservatives are. Invite a doctor or nurse who practices holistic health or is well-read to talk to the class.

Discuss hot dogs and their contents, potato chips and their high fat and salt content. Discover that the oil french fries are cooked in is most important. Point out that safflower oil is best; peanut and corn oils are also good.

Learning Activity 10: Exercise

Have the children read about the need for exercise, an important part of wellness, and then become involved as they follow the directions to *Chicken Fat*, a cassette tape of a children's aerobic dance party featuring Irving the Dynamic Duck, Donald the Disco Frog, Clem the Cookie Gobbler, and Squeak and Squawk from outer space.

Exercise each day in the classroom, either in the morning before the children begin their work or when the class has been sitting for a long period and needs stimulation. Have a different child be the leader each day, and have this leader make up new exercises for the class to follow.

Have the children make an exercise book, drawing stick figures doing various stretching exercises.

Read about cardio-vascular exercises. Discuss the importance of getting the heart rate up each day by jogging, biking, swimming. Do jumping jacks or run in place in class. Discuss the difference between cardio-vascular exercises and stretching exercises.

Learning Activity 11: Relaxation

Have the children close their eyes while seated at their desks or lying on the floor. Give them some suggestions for guided imagery. Let

them imagine the scene you are describing to them. Later, have them draw the scene and discuss their feelings of relaxation. Have them write a story about how they felt and what they imagined.

Discuss the importance of getting the required amount of rest each night. Use a clock and count the number of hours of sleep they get by going to bed at different times. Make a chart of their bedtimes, and in two weeks check their bedtimes again to see if those who needed it are getting more hours of rest.

Discuss feelings and body messages, that is, tuning into the body and hearing what it says. It will tell us when we are hungry, sleepy, restless, lethargic, grumpy, or angry. Help them decide if these feelings are caused from lack of rest, poor diet, or not enough exercise.

Wellness Materials

There are a variety of commercial and homemade materials which can be used to supplement a unit on wellness. Included at the end of this paper is a bibliography listing some of those sources. However, it is important to know how and when to use the materials.

After children are hooked on *Winnie-the-Pooh*, *The Little Black Witch*, or the *Little House* series, introduce them to the corresponding cookbooks so they may enjoy "Berry Whip for After a Happy Afternoon," "The Little Witch's Ticklish Tea," or "Laura's Crackling Cornbread."

Puppets are priceless educational tools. Understanding the emotions of story characters is easier when using a third-person puppet constructed from two paper plates, stapled to a cardboard paper towel tube and covered with scrap material. Felt scraps and yarn are used to give it a happy face on one side and a sad/mad face on the other.

Dental health care can be viewed with interest through the use of a puppet and a poem. Shel Silverstein's poem "The Crocodile's Toothache," in *Where the Sidewalk Ends*, is an excellent poem for children to act out with the use of their homemade puppet. The crocodile is made by hinging together two egg cartons. Styrofoam is used for the eyeballs and a piece of cloth is used for the body. A piece of acetate tubing running through the body to the mouth, where it is taped to a pink balloon, gives the crocodile the appearance of having the bad habit of chewing bubble gum with sugar in it. A large brush and yarn can be purchased to demonstrate correct brushing and flossing.

Free dental health material may be obtained from the National Dairy Council. The Dairy Council also provides excellent kits at different levels for nutritional units.

Pint-Size Puppet Projects contains patterns for stick puppets of nutrition groups and instructions for presenting a play entitled "Peter Picky Eater." Five other stick puppet units are included in this inexpensive book.

The classroom teacher with a generous budget should carefully preview all commercially produced materials before making the final

decision to order. An attractive format does not guarantee good instructional content. The teacher with small financial support for purchase of materials need not despair. Ingenuity, inexpensive materials, and time well spent can result in creative materials which serve the curriculum needs even better than some commercial ones. Both teachers and students can enjoy participating in wellness activities through the use of commercial and homemade materials.

Wellness Research

Education is a front page issue which causes educators and politicians to squirm. Why can't Johnny read? Why are test scores declining? Who is to blame? What are the answers?

There are various responses to the above questions, but good health is one answer which is most often ignored when trying to solve the education puzzle. What Johnny eats, the sleep he receives, the exercise he gets, the amount of stress in his life all contribute to his educational success. Children's performance increases when their state of wellness increases.

Children who come to school tired and hungry are less likely to be attentive than are those who have eaten a nutritious breakfast and received a good night's rest (Smith, 1973).

Lendon H. Smith (1979), noted pediatrician, has researched the area of nutrition and learning ability. He has found that children who eat a high-protein breakfast rather than one consisting of sugar-coated cold cereal and white toast and jelly are more attentive and better learners. He also found that if children are given nutritious snacks, such as cheese, nuts, and fruits, during the day, they are less likely to become behavior problems and more likely to become better learners. According to Smith, nutritious snacks keep the blood-sugar level from falling. It is the rise and fall of the blood-sugar level which results in the out-of-the-seat, out-of-control child.

B.F. Feingold (1975) showed success in treating hyperkinesis by eliminating food additives from children's diets and improving their overall eating habits. His work also indicated that sugar causes hyperactivity in some children.

A study using an experimental diet to determine if diet played a role in hyperactivity or poor attention span among school-aged children left the researchers questioning their results (Levine & Liden, 1976). Children on the experimental diet, similar to the Feingold diet (1979), were less hyperactive than those on a regular diet. However, changes in the children's behavior were noticed by their teachers and not by their parents. The researchers questioned the results that depended largely on teacher and parent perceptions. They concluded that further research was needed in the area of diet and behavior.

According to the Center for Science in the Public Interest (1977), the average American consumes one hundred pounds of sugar each year. School-aged children are large consumers of sugar at school and at home. There appears to be a relationship of sugar consumption with behavior

problems and learning ability among students (Stronck, 1980; Charlton-Seifert, Stratter, & William, 1980; Phlegar & Phlegar, 1979).

It has been a common assumption that children's food preferences are directly related to those of their parents. Birch (1980) found this not to be an accurate assumption. His study showed the food preferences of parents were not the preferences of their children. Although the parents' preferences dictate what foods are present in the home, children's preferences appeared to be influenced by other factors, including peers and TV. In light of his findings, he concluded that nutrition education in the schools should prove to be successful as a means of modifying students' eating behaviors.

The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program in East Harlem, New York City, conducted an informal study to determine the effect of an interdisciplinary approach to remedial reading instruction and nutrition education for ten boys and eight girls ages 9-13 in a summer Reading Enrichment Program in East Harlem (Lowenberg, 1978). The learning experience focused on growth--the student's own and that of plants and vegetables--and the relationship between eating and growing. The children learned the vocabulary related to nutrition, the importance of reading labels, and the enjoyment of reading recipes and making nutritious foods. Informal assessments showed the children improved in their reading, writing, and speaking skills.

Through observation and tests, it was clear that the students had increased their knowledge of nutrition. The students were less reluctant to try new foods and to expand their daily food choices. Educators involved with the program believe the relevance of the study of nutrition accounted for the high-interest level and measured improvement in skills among the students.

Informal assessments indicated that the students' attitudes toward learning had improved and their behavior had improved. It was concluded that the interdisciplinary approach to reading and nutrition when related to meaningful life experiences was successful.

A unit on nutrition in fourth grade classes in a small Wisconsin town resulted in the students' making more nutritious selections for lunch. A pretest showed the children had little knowledge of nutritious foods and no knowledge of the effect of foods eaten. Posttest scores showed increases in their knowledge of nutritional foods. The students were excited about trying new foods and participating in the learning activities. The researchers concluded that teachers can successfully teach units on nutrition in the elementary school which will effect change in students' eating habits (Smith & James, 1980).

It is clear that nutrition education can be a meaningful part of the school curriculum and, more specifically, a meaningful part of the reading curriculum. Additional research is needed to determine the relationship between wellness and educational achievement among students. Also, the effects of stress and lack of exercise on student achievement deserve attention by educational researchers.

Perhaps the missing puzzle piece can be found. Is it possible that Johnny can't read because his state of well-being interferes with the process? Certainly it is a puzzle piece worthy of investigation by educators.

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Speakers Louise Clark, Mary Ann Simbol, and Marilyn Klug

Learning is finding out what you already know.
Doing is demonstrating that you know it.
Teaching is reminding others that they know just as well as you.
You are all learners, doers, teachers.

Richard Bach



Speaker David Memory

I like the dreams of the future better than the history of the past.

Thomas Jefferson

IMPROVING THE READING ABILITIES OF LIMITED- AND NON-ENGLISH SPEAKERS

David M. Memory

Reasonably often teachers of reading find themselves facing a class of native speakers of English which also contains one or two students who have limited proficiency in English or who do not speak English at all. Not having been hired or trained to teach English as a second language, many of these teachers plead that they should not be expected to teach English to these limited-English-proficient (LEP) students. These teachers contend that they would not know what to do even if they were expected to make an effort. Admittedly, there are distinct instructional specialities that focus on LEP students--fields such as TESL (teaching English as a second language) and TEFL (teaching English as a foreign language)--and these specialities are advanced enough that they can be pursued at the graduate level. Nevertheless, instructional strategies exist for helping LEP students improve as readers of English which can be employed by teachers with no formal training in any of the specialities. Moreover, many of these strategies can be used while the teacher is continuing to aim most of the reading instruction toward the native English speakers who comprise the vast majority of his or her class.

What follows is a series of guidelines for planning reading instruction for LEP students in regular classrooms. Related to these guidelines are specific instructional strategies for implementing the guidelines. Though some of the strategies are more suitable for some grade levels than for others, all of the guidelines apply to the elementary grades through high school, as well as to adults. These suggestions do not constitute a sequential program or a comprehensive program for improving the reading abilities of LEP students. However, as separate techniques they are proven methods for working with LEP students who (a) can read in their native languages; (b) are being instructed in English in the content areas, such as science and social studies; and (c) need to become fluent readers of English.

Guideline One

Provide opportunities for ongoing development of oral language abilities in English.

Teachers of reading hear constantly that reading ability is based on oral language abilities. An observer of or participant in foreign language instruction might comment that at least one teaching approach--the translation method--appears in no way to acknowledge that truism. Indeed, the idea of teaching students to do verbatim translations of sentences, poems, and stories may be a defensible approach when exposure to the foreign language outside the classroom is likely to be only in the written form. In the United States this is typically the case with language instruction involving, for example, French or German. However, with second language instruction, when the second language is the language of television, of radio, of most business establishments, and of most individuals in the

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larger community, exposure to the second language outside the classroom is likely to be primarily in spoken form. Therefore, in this country teachers of LEP students should make efforts to prepare the students to take advantage of that exposure. Of course, many LEP children have learned to read English fluently even without the benefit of conscious efforts by teachers to help them build their oral language abilities. Nevertheless, when teachers do try to make oral language development by LEP students easier and more rapid, these students can more comfortably and more successfully capitalize on the unending opportunities to continue that development outside the classroom. As a result, the task of developing reading ability in English will become correspondingly easier because that ability can be based at least partly on oral language abilities.

An important part of establishing a foundation for the development of oral language abilities is sensitizing the class to what the LEP students have to offer and what they may need in the way of support as they make the transition into an English-speaking environment. This is essential if the LEP students are to feel comfortable enough to want to learn to communicate in English with their classmates.

Getting other class members to appreciate LEP students as products of cultures different from the United States but cultures deserving respect can be accomplished partly through familiarizing the class with interesting and significant information about those cultures. Initially, the teacher through discussions, films, reading assignments, and so on, and English-speaking students through reports can provide such information to the class. Eventually though, as the LEP students become comfortable using English, they can be allowed to share their knowledge, experiences, and thoughts about their native cultures.

Making students aware of the difficulties and challenges facing their LEP classmates is equally important but requires very different techniques. In general, the English speakers in the class should recognize that the LEP students need to communicate with classmates in English but that it will take time to learn how to do that well. In some classes a student may have spent time in a foreign country in which a language other than English is used and will be able to convey the feelings of isolation and even helplessness that he or she might have experienced there. Showing a foreign language film without subtitles can create those same feelings, if only in a weakened form. Obviously the teacher should not paint such a distressing picture that the English-speaking students end up only pitying their LEP classmates and the LEP students begin pitying themselves. Nevertheless, sensitively planned efforts can be carried out that will help produce a school environment in which LEP students feel that their classmates support them in their first anxious efforts to communicate in English.

More concrete forms of support in developing oral language abilities are also possible and are important as well. Such support can be provided by the teacher by communicating with the LEP students in ways that facilitate understanding and learning the English language. For example, if the teacher uses relatively consistent oral directions with the class, the LEP student is more likely to infer the meanings of those directions and to learn them through repeated exposure. Also, by using simple but natural vocabulary and syntax when talking to the LEP students, the teacher can increase the likelihood that they will understand what has been said. As these students experience increasing success in their efforts to understand the English spoken by the teacher, they will gain greater confidence in their ability to communicate in English in more demanding situations.

Of course, in his or her efforts to use understandable English, the teacher should not inadvertently create a distorted language environment that can only handicap LEP students in their efforts to learn English in its natural form. Instead, the teacher should attempt to provide a supportive setting in which the LEP students can learn to understand and use basic English vocabulary and sentence structure by hearing and comprehending them in the language of their teacher.

Much spoken English that must be mastered to communicate successfully outside the classroom, however, is not often encountered in normal classroom interactions. Therefore, to help the LEP students develop broad-based oral language abilities, the teacher should provide structured opportunities to learn common sentences and phrases used in communicating in important non-class settings. Since this is a primary goal of most published programs for teaching English as a second language (ESL), the teacher has many resources from which to draw. In the Appendix is a list of basic texts for ESL instruction. The teacher, an adult aide or volunteer, or a student tutor could use materials from this list for helping LEP students learn sentences and phrases necessary for communication outside the classroom. If direct assistance by the teacher, an aide, or a tutor is not possible, tapes provided with published ESL materials could be purchased, or tapes based on ESL lessons could be made locally by the teacher or by student or adult volunteers. These tapes could then be used by the LEP students while they follow along in the printed materials. Having the basic ESL texts themselves available to be read by the LEP students as they listen to such tapes is important if this work is to have maximum effect on both oral language and reading abilities. It is reasonable to say that LEP students can learn a great deal about communicating in English outside the classroom without being instructed in that area at school. Nevertheless, important sentences and phrases learned through planned instruction by the teacher, an aide, or a tutor or through self-instruction using a tape can help prepare LEP students to communicate successfully outside school. As their confidence about communicating in English in those settings builds, their oral language abilities improve and so does their potential for learning to read English fluently.

Guideline Two

Provide opportunities to learn the syntax of English.

More so than in many other languages, the meaning of English is conveyed by the ordering or placement of the words in sentences--that is, the syntax of the language. For example, the meaning of the word *flush* in each of the following sentences is conveyed primarily by its location in the sentences:

- (1) Her face will flush if you laugh at her.
- (2) The flush of sunrise was on the clouds.
- (3) The edge of the new shelf must be flush with the old one.
- (4) The boxer hit his opponent flush on the nose.

LEP students could memorize every meaning of *flush* but still not understand any of these sentences if they do not understand the syntax of English.

The primary way in which individuals learn the syntax of a language is by being immersed in the spoken form of that language. Therefore, all of what was said above about implementing Guideline One is relevant to this second guideline. Nevertheless, other strategies exist for teaching the syntax of English which should be given consideration because they can produce results faster than unplanned exposure to the spoken language and because they have direct benefits for learning to read English.

One strategy is the use of pattern drills. These are exercises in which a student or small group of students begins with a sentence and then modifies it in response to a cue given by the teacher, a tutor, or even a tape. For example, in a substitution drill, an LEP student might begin with the sentence, "Frank got a baseball at the store." When given the cue "glove," the student would use his or her understanding of that word to conclude that the new sentence should be, "Frank got a glove at the store." This drill could continue with such cues as "bat," "belt," and "hat." After drills have been used focusing on other positions in this sentence pattern, the exercise might be expanded to include varied cues such as "bought," "shirt," "coat," "Mary," "balloon," "at the game," "hot dot," "cap," "found," "dollar bill," "on the street," "puppy," and "baby bird." One of the advantages of this and other types of pattern drills is that they do not simply involve repeating what the teacher or tutor or a tape has said. Instead, they require the students to understand what has been said and then to produce a sentence that makes sense. This format helps ensure that the LEP students are thinking and helps prevent the monotony of simple repetition. For drills to have maximum impact on reading improvement, it is helpful for the students to see the written form of the sentences and cues at the same time they hear them. Detailed discussions of the different types of pattern drills and how to use them effectively can be found in books by Rivers and Temperley (1978), Finocchiaro (1969), and Paxton and Bruder (1976).

A more interesting and ultimately more important way to learn the syntax of English is by reading simple materials in English that are written in the sentence patterns being studied. This is particularly important at the beginning stages of learning English as a second language when the content area textbooks and even the oral language environment to which LEP students are exposed are typically much more complex syntactically than the sentence patterns which they might be studying in class. Reading numerous articles and stories written in those basic sentence patterns gives the LEP students an opportunity to master those patterns without being bewildered by the more varied and complex ones which they encounter in content area textbooks and in the oral language of, for example, teachers or television and radio broadcasters. Because of the importance of extensive reading of simplified materials, several publishers market anthologies and other readers designed especially for students learning English as a second language. Some of the supplementary readers now marketed for ESL instruction are listed in the Appendix. Though not written specifically for LEP students, many of the high interest/low vocabulary anthologies and novelettes common in middle and secondary school reading classes can be used effectively in this way as well. For either type of material to have its maximum benefit, many different topics must be available at all difficulty levels, particularly the lower levels. Reading one or two articles or stories is not sufficient to produce mastery of a certain sentence pattern. That pattern must be encountered and understood repeatedly, and the best way to do that is by reading many simple selections that are comprehended and enjoyed.

Guidelin. Three

Provide opportunities for the LEP students to associate visual and other sensory experiences directly with spoken and written English.

Individuals who studied a foreign language using the translation method can easily be befuddled by the teacher's actions when they observe a class taught solely in the foreign language itself. These individuals can recall how quickly their own teacher had dispelled confusion by simply providing the English equivalent of a foreign language word that had stumped the students. Instead, in many foreign language classes today the teacher uses a virtually indescribable range of pedagogical resources to avoid giving the English translations of words and phrases not understood by their students. Observers of such classes who do not know the reason for these hand signals, charades, pantomimes, and dramatic vignettes sometimes have to restrain themselves to keep from blurting out the English equivalents of the words that seem to have brought the class to a halt. The fact is, though, that the teacher in such a situation knows exactly what he or she is doing. The intention is to get the students to associate the word or phrase in question with its *meaning*, not with its English equivalent. If new words and phrases are simply translated for students, they are likely to have to translate those expressions into English before they understand them in the future. If, instead, the meanings of new expressions are shown or demonstrated to students, they are more likely to be able to understand these foreign expressions immediately when they encounter them in speech or in written materials. This same principle applies in learning English as a second language as well.

One way to accomplish this with LEP students is to use referents--that is, the objects, actions, or feelings to which words refer--when introducing new words. Using pictures, diagrams, and other illustrations is an obvious way to increase the chance that LEP students will learn to associate actual meanings, not native language equivalents, with English words. In some subject areas, such as art, science, physical education, industrial acts, and home economics, the objects themselves can be displayed when new words are introduced. In fact, to speed up the learning of such words, the objects can be labeled and left out in view for the benefit of the LEP students. Of course, the meanings of some words are not concrete objects, but rather are actions or feelings; therefore, their meanings are sometimes not easily depicted. Frequently, though, the teacher or a student can use a bit of dramatic talent to help LEP students sense the meanings of such new words (Duffelmeyer & Duffelmeyer, 1979). The importance of using visual aids in teaching vocabulary does not preclude having dictionaries available for LEP students. However, to help prevent these students from simply translating new expressions into their native languages, these dictionaries should be special ESL dictionaries written entirely in English or should be regular beginning- or elementary-level English dictionaries.

Another method for inducing LEP students to associate meanings, not native language equivalents, with new expressions is to have written materials acted out (Burns, Roe, & Ross, 1984). For example, in the elementary grades songs and choral readings in which the students act out elements of the selection are not only very popular but can be particularly helpful for teaching new terms to LEP students. At all levels the dramatization of stories and the informal presentation of short plays are well-

liked activities in addition to being effective means of introducing LEP students to the meanings of new words.

A third way to help LEP students associate visual and other sensory experiences directly with spoken and written English is through use of hands-on and other direct experience activities, such as art and science projects, physical education activities, and field trips. For such activities to have their maximum impact on the learning of English by LEP students, the teacher should make a point of explaining in simple English what is going on while it is happening. The teacher certainly should not attempt to be a play-by-play announcer, but some conscious effort to let the LEP students hear objects labeled and actions described is important if the students are to associate English words with the things and events they are seeing. To reinforce any learning that begins during these activities, the teacher can also have the LEP students read accounts of what went on. In the elementary grades these accounts might take the form of language experience stories dictated or actually written by native English speakers in the class. In the upper grades narrative or descriptive compositions based on such activities can be assigned for completion by the other students in the class, and these compositions can be read by the LEP students. With the activities themselves still fresh in their memories, the LEP students are likely to find it easier to understand their classmates' writings. And most importantly, the LEP students are more likely to associate the words in those writings directly with objects and actions they observed only a short time earlier. They are less likely to be inclined to translate those words into their native language equivalents.

Guideline Four

Provide opportunities for the LEP students to understand ideas, not just translate words, when reading English.

The instructional strategies just discussed can do a great deal to induce LEP students to associate meanings, not native language equivalents, with English words. However, not all meaning conveyed by language involves visual and other sensory referents that can be used as teaching aids in the ways described. If LEP students learn to associate meaning directly with only a few words that have very visual referents, they will not become truly fluent readers of English. Instead, they are likely to become the kind of reader that the translation method of foreign language instruction often produces. These LEP students may be able to translate a selection in English very accurately word by word but still have only the vaguest notion of what the selection actually says in broad terms. Of course, word-by-word reading is not a problem limited to some LEP students; it is a cause of poor comprehension among many native English speakers as well. Moreover, many of the techniques useful for helping these readers are also effective with LEP students.

One good method for helping LEP students understand ideas, not just translate words, when they read English is to give them opportunities to read materials on topics about which they already know a great deal. With a native-English-speaking male in high school, that might be articles on basketball or car repair. With LEP students a good source of materials on familiar topics is books about their native countries (Carrell & Eisterhold, 1983). Unfortunately, there appears to be no one comprehensive

source of easy-reading selections on other countries and cultures of the world. Nevertheless, many individual books that can be used effectively in this way do exist. Such books can be identified by consulting the reference volumes listed in the Appendix. By spending some of their reading time with selections from which they can get meaning relatively easily, such as selections on their native cultures, LEP students can begin to move away from the approach of simply translating to the goal of direct understanding when reading English.

Another technique for helping LEP students read for meaning is the use of what has been called "narrow reading" (Carrell & Eisterhold, 1983). The idea of this strategy is to make it possible for a student to continue much of his or her reading to a single topic or to stories, articles, or books by the same author. The intent is to enable the student to become familiar with the repeated vocabulary of a particular topic or with the style of a particular writer. Then it is more likely that the student can focus on the meaning of what is being read, not on the words and the syntax. In their attempts to accommodate the interests of native-English-speaking readers, most teachers of reading become familiar with ways to identify articles and books on specific topics and stories and books by specific authors. These same search strategies can be used to locate appropriate materials for LEP students.

Another method for encouraging reading for meaning, as well as helping limited-English speakers become better students, is making easy-reading books available on topics already studied or being studied in the content areas. Through films, demonstrations, and other visually-oriented techniques, teachers of social studies, science, health, and other subjects can often communicate information more effectively to LEP students than can be communicated by textbooks. As a result of use of such techniques by their teachers, these students will often have developed stores of knowledge which can help them understand written materials on topics studied in the content areas.

Unfortunately, visually-oriented teaching strategies do not often prepare LEP students adequately for reading the regular textbooks used in most content area classes, which tend to be too difficult for them in both vocabulary and syntax. Therefore, teachers of reading who want to use content-related materials to help LEP students learn to read for meaning must locate easy-reading books for this purpose. Though not used widely in the regular content area classes of middle and secondary schools, such books do exist, particularly in the areas of consumer economics, health, home economics, science, and social studies. Books on topics related to the content areas and written at readability levels as low as the second grade can be obtained from publishers such as EMC, Follett, Globe, Pitman Learning, Steck-Vaughn, and Xerox. LEP students who have and use the opportunity to read such materials on topics they have studied in the content areas are more likely to get meaning directly from those materials and not simply translate what they are trying to read. Moreover, those students enjoy the added benefit of learning content-related information and preparing themselves for coping with the regular textbooks that they hope one day to be able to read fluently.

A final technique for facilitating reading for meaning involves letting LEP students read a native language version of a selection before the English version is read. In classes on foreign languages, reading the English version of a selection before trying to read the foreign language original is a strategy that has been used effectively, though surreptitiously, by many students over the years. The question of whether or not

these native language versions of foreign language originals should be allowed in classes using the translation method of instruction has engendered negative feelings, often strong ones, among many teachers. It is a different issue, though, when the objective is to help students get meaning directly from materials written in English without having to translate the materials word by word. If an LEP student, for example, already knows what happens in a certain story because he or she has read a native language version of the story, the student can more easily get the meaning of whole phrases and sentences in the English version and is not as likely to resort to word-by-word translation.

Guideline Five

Emphasize the reading skills that have definite value for the LEP student.

Trained and experienced teachers of reading have a wide repertoire of techniques for helping beginning or less able readers become better readers of English. Many of those techniques are intended to improve word recognition ability by teaching the use of phonic skills and context clues. A problem for teachers of LEP students, however, is that these approaches to word recognition can be used only to the extent that the individual has command of oral English. An issue for these teachers, then, is what reading skills to emphasize with students who have limited proficiency in oral English.

With LEP students whose native languages use the Roman alphabet and who have learned to read their native languages at a basic or higher level, one question concerns what phonic skills, if any, should be taught. Providing instruction on phonic skills that were learned in the native language and that apply equally well in English is a waste of time and effort, particularly when many other more important reading skills need to be taught. However, most other languages that use the Roman alphabet have systems of letter-sound relationships that differ at least somewhat from those of English. Therefore, to make efficient use of instructional time and to prepare LEP students for handling their own special problems in decoding and pronouncing English words, the emphasis should be on the differences between the sound system of the native language and that of English. This writer is unaware of any single source of instructionally significant information on the phonetic differences between English and each of the other languages that use the Roman alphabet. Nevertheless, helpful bits of information related to Spanish can be found in books by Burns, Roe and Ross (1984, p. 496) and Lamberg and Lamb (1980, pp. 393-397).

Another area of reading instruction which should receive special attention with LEP students is endings, both inflectional endings and suffixes. Without thorough knowledge of English syntax, LEP students often have trouble determining what is the subject, what is the verb, what is a modifier, and so on in a sentence. On the other hand, if, for instance, they know that a word ending in *ed* is likely to be a verb or an adjective, a word ending in *er* is probably an adjective or a noun, a word ending in *ly* is almost certainly an adverb, and a word ending in *ance* is probably a noun, then they have knowledge that can help them overcome their weaknesses in the area of syntax. Therefore, when reading

instruction focuses on endings, the teacher of LEP students should make doubly certain that those students learn the content of that instruction well.

It goes without saying that LEP students can profit from many other areas of traditional reading instruction, possibly even more so than can native English speakers. These two areas deserve special emphasis, but others, too, should get thorough attention if LEP students are to learn to read English fluently.

Conclusion

Some teachers of reading might say that these rather indirect and even incidental approaches for improving the reading abilities of limited- and non-English speakers cannot possibly accomplish what needs to be accomplished. They might believe that a separate class on English as a second language should be available for those students.

Probably such a class could be beneficial. However, in most schools that option is considered financially and logistically impossible. More importantly, though, evidence is mounting that one of the best ways to teach a second language is through the kinds of indirect, incidental methods discussed here (Stevens, 1983). Therefore, teachers with LEP students in their classes cannot justifiably argue that their efforts to help these students improve as readers would have to be so minimal that the efforts would be doomed to failure. To the contrary, the evidence is that regular classroom teachers of reading are in exactly the kind of situation in which those students are likely to make the greatest progress. We can hope these teachers will make the kinds of efforts discussed here to capitalize on the opportunities available during the regular reading instruction aimed toward native-English-speaking students.

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APPENDIX

Basic Texts for Teaching English as a Second Language

- Yes! English for children.* Addison-Wesley. (for elementary grades)
I like English. Scott, Foresman. (for elementary grades)
Steps to English. McGraw-Hill. (for elementary grades)
Welcome to English. Regents. (for elementary grades)
Learning English as a second language. Oceana. (for elementary grades)
Reach out. Macmillan. (for elementary grades)
New routes to English. Macmillan. (for middle grades, from beginning level)
English for a changing world. Scott, Foresman. (for middle and secondary grades, from beginning level)
Work English. Harcourt. (for secondary grades, from beginning level)
New horizons in English. Addison-Wesley. (for secondary grades, from beginning level)
English for adults: In tune. Scott, Foresman. (for adults, from beginning level)
Entry to English. Steck-Vaughn (for adults, from beginning level)
Spectrum. Regents. (for secondary students and adults, from beginning level)
Modern American English. Regents. (for secondary students and adults, from beginning level)
Lado English series. Regents. (for secondary students and adults, from beginning level)
Side by side. Prentice-Hall. (from beginning level)
Lifelines. Regents. (survival skills series, for secondary students and adults, from beginning level)
Odyssey. Longman. (for secondary students, from beginning level)
In touch. Longman. (for secondary students and adults, from beginning level)
AKL. Longman. (for secondary students and adults, from beginning level)

Supplementary Readers for Teaching English as a Second Language

- Reading . . . plus.* Addison-Wesley. (4 booklets of stories)
Regents readers. Regents. (from beginning level)
Readings in English. Regents. (from beginning level)
Regents illustrated classics. Regents. (from beginning level)
American classics. Regents. (from intermediate level)
Longman American structural readers. Longman. (from beginning level)

Books in easy English. Longman. (from beginning level)
Longman structural readers. Longman. (from beginning level)
Classics made simple. Longman. (from beginning level)

Book Lists Useful in Identifying Books on Other Cultures

- Christensen, J. (Ed.). (in press). *Your reading: A booklist for junior high students.* Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.
- Paperbound books for young people.* (1980). New York: R.R. Bowker.
- Small, R.C., Jr. (Ed.). (1982). *Books for you: A booklist for senior high students.* Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.
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- Tway, E. (Ed.). (1981). *Reading ladders for human relations.* Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.
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CREATIVE ORAL READING: THE WRITER, THE READER, AND
THE ILLUSION OF REALITY

Mark E. Stoffel

Chloe Armstrong and Paul Brandes claim their text *The Oral Interpretation of Literature* is based on the concept that "oral reading of literature *vitalizes* the experience of literature."¹ Although other scholarly spokesmen for oral interpretation say it in other words, the "vitalization," "re-creation," "interpretation," "dramatization" of literature is the primary aim of all reading aloud. It is a cooperative venture where reader and listener share the responsibilities the writer sets up for them in the illusion of reality.

Vitalizes is a particularly well-chosen claim for what the oral interpreter attempts to do, but no matter how the oral reader describes what he does (*vitalize*, *re-create*, *interpret*, or *dramatize*), it seems to me a consideration of some artistic limits should be applied to the oral reader as he directs his dramatic talents toward his audience in re-creating the printed page.

I am not prepared at this point to accept the responsibilities inherent in projecting a *bona fide* theory of oral interpretation. This has been done,² although not as systematically or comprehensively as the method/medium deserves. But I do hope, more in the way of stimulating inquiry than of presenting definitive answers, to call attention to the special relationship between author, oral reader, and audience.

As a creative form which often combines rhetorical method and poetic medium, oral interpretation is an art illustrating the interrelatedness of rhetoric and poetics. Oral interpretation of literature has in its ability both to extend and to limit imaginative creativity for the performer's audience.

Certainly one needs to be on guard against a tendency to simplify what is complex and to make obvious that which was never meant to be obvious. One hesitates, or certainly should, to come up with easy answers to what may well be meant to be essentially unanswerable issues. There are times when any oral articulation seems destined to fall far short; words *do* fail. Expressions of genuine sympathy and understanding are rarely communicated in verbal symbol and the words of Eliza Doolittle in *My Fair Lady*, "Don't talk of love, show me," illustrate the need for better communication than verbal. What the world needs now is not "love, sweet love," but an antidote to what can well be described as "paucity of the imagination."³ Susanne Langer wrote, "The treatment of poetry as physical sound comparable to music rests, I believe, on an utter misconception of what a writer creates, and what is the role of sound in that creation."⁴ And in saying this, she perhaps did "not conceive of oral interpretation as a viable art form in our culture."⁵

Just as those of us who recall the imaginative intrigue of the radio versions of "Captain Midnight," "The Shadow," or "Inner Sanctum," nostalgically are convinced that television just doesn't give this generation

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the kind of imaginative development we were encouraged to have, a Susanne Langer may even question the very precision that good interpretive reading gives to writing, which when read silently was more capable, for discriminating readers, of being an experience of the mind. She said, "Only in writing could prose become an artistic medium at all,"⁶

To the extent any art form appeals to a variety of sense perceptions outwardly and directly, it limits itself in imaginative perceptions. Thus the idea, for example, of liking the book better than the movie may be in part a product of creative and personal imaging versus mass appeal and stultification of more personal imagistic activity. It is for this very reason that good music may succeed with people for whom other artistic forms appear gross and overdone.

The problem for the oral interpreter in re-creating a literary experience is an extension of the same problem the writer had in putting his meaning, impression, emotionality into words on paper. Just as the written word is woefully inadequate as symbolic agent for what the writer "means," so the spoken word also has its limitations. The spoken word can be utterly guilty of misdirection or misinterpretation. Even at its best (most accurate), it can fail, for paradoxically, at best it communicates more impact but less possibility for a range of impact than it does in its printed form. That is to say, to the degree the spoken word is presented in such a way as to be clearly and precisely interpreted, it is so at the expense of remaining intentionally ambiguous, or capable of multi-level meaning.

And so, as in most complex situations in the "real" world, the oral interpreter runs headlong into the horns of some proverbial and perennial dilemma. He must choose on what level he will read aloud, knowing that to the degree that he successfully re-creates, interprets, or dramatizes the material, he ironically may be doing so at the imaginative expense of his audience. That is to say, as the expense for being effective, the oral interpreter in his art may be guilty of two sins. First, he may, by re-creating literature, set up images so imagistically provocative that the audience is asked to do little beyond accept them--indeed the listener is then "captive" and exercises little imagination or creativity. Second, the oral reader makes literature less dimensional and certainly less ambiguous when he reads interpretively, and some literature has purposeful and intentional ambiguity, which consequently is potentially lost in the act of making the printed page oral.

I have more sympathy than understanding for my poet friend who was convinced not only that it was impossible to say just what one means and feels but also that the very act of writing was a poetic compromise. He believed that poetry was not what was put down on paper, but it was somehow the motivation and the "essence" of the poet, that on paper one was capable of salvaging only the most externalized aspects of the poetic. His attitude was not unlike that recently expressed by Howard Nemerov: "Poetry is what got left behind in translation--if in doubt translate and use what's leftover."⁷

Yet, of course, no matter how inefficient words are as symbols and despite the kind of tyranny to which Stuart Chase shows that words subject us,⁸ ours is a world committed to verbal communication and to the verbal arts.

Korzybski invented the structural differential and stressed such deductions relevant to oral interpretation of poetry as these:

1. Words are not things but mean nothing in themselves; meaning in words is dependent upon context.
2. Abstract words and terms give rise to spurious identification according to the level of abstraction.
3. Things "mean" according to our experience and are not absolute.
4. The formation of concepts upon which sane men can agree is a prime goal of communication.
5. "Simile, metaphor, poetry are legitimate and useful methods of communication, provided speaker and hearer are conscious that they are being employed."⁹

Susanne Langer called all speech the "Art of Words," and distinguished between what is often called denotative (rhetorical) and connotative (poetic) as essentially the fundamental distinction between "the informative and the evocative use of words." The latter, she claimed is self-expressive and communicates feelings which are reacted to, either sympathetically or antipathetically.¹⁰

Jere Veilleux made a significant psychological point when he said that making literature oral reveals meaning and feeling masked by one's habitual response to written language symbol.¹¹ What the oral interpreter is doing, in addition to making a rather obvious appeal to auditory sense perception, is attempting to activate the reader's responsibility to what he reads or hears--to force him to accept the language symbols on a level of confrontation not hitherto experienced. This in itself is something separate from mere auditory appeal. The function then of the oral interpreter at this point is not essentially that of making the literature auditory but of making it genuinely *experienced* through creating an illusion of reality.

George Orwell was primarily an essayist and novelist rather than a poet, but he was obsessed with the habitual, almost ritualistic, response given to language. He said, "Words and meaning have almost parted company." He was greatly disturbed by the inclination to let our language completely decay, and he blamed foolish thinking on slovenly language. "A scrupulous writer," said Orwell, "in every sentence that he writes, will ask himself at least four questions thus: What am I trying to say? What words will express it? What image or idiom will make it clearer? Is this image fresh enough to have an effect?"¹²

But even if the writer is quite precise and clear--even if he writes in the best Orwellian style--the fact remains that the reader, grown fat and lazy on unimaginative reading habits, may need to be lifted out of his lethargy by dramatic interpretation of these previously uninspiring word symbols. The participant that responds to oral interpretation is not necessarily a more active celebrant in the mystery of literature; he simply may be forced into a level of consciousness which previously was closed to him.

Of course, there is no use kidding ourselves about levels of sense involvement. The predominant characteristic of literature that is oral and given interpretive coloring is not that the oral reader has allowed the audience to involve itself more successfully with language symbols, but that the reader has literally shown the audience what he thinks the language symbols mean and has evoked response. If there were a way oral literature could make language more viable to the listener without imposing upon that listener the limited dimension of specific interpretation, then Susanne Langer and some teachers of literature would be willing to more affectionately embrace the medium called oral interpretation.

When Gustave Le Bon, early behaviorist, studied crowd participation and response he concluded its demands were less sophisticated collectively than the crowd components were separately.¹³ The good silent reader may want to image for himself and be literally handicapped in his poetic experience by accepting a less participatory role as listener.

The reasonable response to this, however, is that the good reader can easily become a good listener. The fact of more specific sensory appeal does not necessitate a less active or less critical role by the listener in the experience with oral literature. He still individually has the right and duty to accept or reject the interpretive emphasis which the oral reader has chosen to give.

Karl Shapiro, poet, teacher, critic, is vitally concerned about the state of American poetry. He felt himself qualified to assert his concern. He claimed that experience as librarian, writer, and professor is relatively unusual, and that he has "a perspective in literature which should be shared." The perspective which he shares is a dismal analysis of the American university student, "whose illiteracy is staggering":

They do not want to read: they want to "experience."
They do not want to learn: they want to "feel." They have
become almost impossible to teach. . . . Creative writing
has hit the level of playschool--a kind of adult kindergarten.¹⁴

What has happened to poetry, if Shapiro is right, can hardly be blamed on oral interpretation. Rather, oral interpretation may be the salvation of poetry. But to the degree that students are satisfied to "experience" the performance of literature rather than to study literature, one sees Shapiro's objection. The answer is to make proficient oral interpreters of students who might otherwise be satisfied with the most passive participation in literature.

Shapiro was especially upset with the "pseudo-poets, the show-biz rebels," who neither have read nor could understand the fine but obscure poetry of Dylan Thomas, with whom they try to somehow identify. Shapiro personified the pseudo-Dylans in a swinging, singing, media-muse named Dylan MacGoon (named for Bob Dylan and Rod McCuen), interviewed by top news commentators, featured on TV specials, the author of four Random House books, a "lower-middle brow crooner who has sold more than 50 million records." The poet-professor claimed that the popularization of the more popular aspects of poetry brought about a breathtaking downhill crash of American poetry. "Poetry," he said, "plunged out of the classics, out of the modern masters, out of all standards, and plopped into the playpen."¹⁵ Thus for Shapiro these are times when no distinction is made between rock lyrics and Shakespearean sonnets, when in the oft-quoted words of W.B. Yeats, "The best lack all conviction while the worst/

Are full of passionate intensity."¹⁶ Yeats wrote an evaluation of society which was for all time and for all aspects of society. He described politics, religion, and especially the arts. His couplet could well constitute a warning, a motto, designed to insist on sensibility and balance in all that we do--even when we function as oral interpreters or re-creators of literature.

I hope one does not need to ask, What is the relevance of all this to me? But one might well ask, What contribution can we make as oral interpreters and teachers of oral literature to the encouragement of imaginative responses to poetry?

I think there is at least a threefold answer. First, we need to recognize that the poetry we use in interpretive performances is quite varied not only in the style and subject matter, but especially in the degree it can be communicated in a "one-shot deal." To paraphrase Orwell: all poetry is oral, but some is more oral than others. Second, there is the realization that the audience needs to become more active, needs to use and develop its creative *imaging* faculties rather than to sit passively waiting to be entertained. Third, the oral reader needs to concern himself with activating that audience not only through an appropriate choice of literature, but with an appropriate use of *personae* and role playing, which maintains necessary ambiguity in more subtle literature yet allows overtness where intended.

My own experience in teaching poetry leads me to consider poems to fall generally into three categories: narrative, thematic, and lyrical. This is somewhat similar to the more specific divisions Earl Daniels made in seeing the poem as story, pictures, idea, organization, and music.¹⁷

Categorical distinctions of this kind are made in good faith that they will be taken loosely, as indications of some emphasis, not as an absolute sorting and labeling process. A good poem can hardly be conceived that will not present some story (often covertly); evoke imagistic pictures; contain significant thematic ideas; embody organization, form, and artistry; and constitute all manner of rhythmic and lyric appeals to the musical. Dylan Thomas' "Fern Hill" is that kind of poem, but considered carefully so is Eliot's "Prufrock," or even Gray's "Elegy." So are most of the works of Blake, Donne, Hopkins, Yeats, and Cummings. But to read, no matter how interpretively, Hopkin's "The Winchover" or Yeats' "Sailing to Byzantium" to an audience unfamiliar with their intricacies and obscurities is pure lunacy. Yet we have heard oral interpreters sing their way through Thomas and Cummings and Herrick and Blake with little understanding of the communicative limitations of some highly metaphysical poetry. They might just as well be reading "Miniver Cheevy," "Anabelle Lee," or "Frankie and Johnnie."

I am not suggesting that only the most blatant narrative or most popular lyrical poetry be read aloud, but rather that the performer realize that even at best, some subtleties of poetic language are diminished in a medium which interprets, but does not give time for reflection, analysis, and many of the other things the silent reader is used to utilizing. In the classroom it is another matter. What would make more sense after analysis and close line-by-line explication of a poem like "Second Coming" than not only to read the poem aloud but to orally interpret it. I would suggest one might very well read a poem aloud for more complete sense

perception, might well discuss allusions, devices, poetic characteristics, persuasive appeals, meaning, and significance. Then as a critical means of evaluation one might reread the poem not merely orally for communicative purposes but interpretively with artistic, re-creative, role-playing purposes.

But both overt oral interpretation and oral reading are presented for an audience, and it is that audience that needs to be considered. And one of the paradoxes we have to face in oral interpreting is the problem of reading in such a way as to be properly understood and appreciated by an audience that hears the poem only once.

There is considerable stress placed on the oral reader's need to study and analyze the works he reads, and well there should be. But it is one of the ironies of the art of oral interpretation that so much stress is placed on the material and on the performer and so little is placed on the audience. Of course, one may say that the audience is an element beyond the interpreter's control, that at best one can only attempt to predetermine the sort of audience one will have and choose material and manner generally appropriate. This is a reasonable start, but it must go beyond this. The oral reader needs to tune his audience and put them, regardless of their predispositions, into a receptive mood.

"How Does a Poem Mean?" is a rather cute question, but it correctly focuses on John Ciardi's concern for poetry that *does* something rather than *says* or *means* something. The *thematic* approach to the teaching of poetry for Ciardi is ineffective. He paraphrased Yeats:

O body swayed to music, O quickening glance
How shall I tell the dancer from the dance.

And he said that "what the poem is, is inseparable from its own performance of itself."¹⁸

For the oral interpreter, "its own performance of itself" is impossible; the poem does not exist as poem unless it is acted upon by a reader. And if one can say the poem exists as poem only in its experience, one recognizes the dramatic contribution to the experience of that poem not only by the intermediary oral interpreter, but also by the listener-participant.

Margaret Robb's definition of oral interpretation, "oral reading, with or without memorization, which has as its purpose communication of the intellectual and emotional content of literature to an audience,"¹⁹ should echo Ciardi and make us increasingly aware of the organic function of listener as well as reader and literature to the experiencing of poetry. The crucial responsibility of the listener is the creative utilization of imagination. Without considerable use of the faculty of imaging it is questionable whether anything but the most nakedly prosaic poetry can exist. Thus certainly an important function of the oral interpreter is to assist in this process. To belabor a point made earlier, for the listener who is highly imaginative there may be considerable irony, in that to the extent the interpreter convincingly presents particular emotive stimuli, to the extent he motivates particular images, he tends to eliminate the possibility of others. Therefore the oral interpreter should know his literature as well as be able to project it; otherwise he is *limiting*, not *extending*, the imaging potential. On the other hand it is hoped that

the listener is sufficiently critical and *eclectic* to actively react, not simply accept, interpretive nuances. The emphasis on what the audience *sees* is not so important as the mental imaging which the *words* convey. An audience that has grown up confusing ideas with things and is accustomed to believing the eyes (exploited in TV, movies, drama, and most life situations) must be encouraged to see the visibles as *symbols* or as even irrelevant.

This is not true of course in such overt interpretation as impersonation, for example, Hal Holbrook as Mark Twain. But impersonation, although perhaps the most popularly successful form of interpretation, is grounded in concepts antithetical to encouraging audience imagination. It only asks for one image and one commitment--that the viewer-listener believe for effect that the interpreter is who he pretends to be, a kind of wonderful artistic fraud. Ogden Nash told of his admiration for any kind of artistic deception: "And that's why I admire a suave prevarication, because I prevaricate so awkwardly and gauche. And that is why I can never amount to anything politically or socially."²⁰ But the emphasis of impersonation is *off* the literature and on the reader-performer, a rhetorical or at least dramatistic situation.

Today's oral interpretation audience might well emulate the attitudes of Elizabethan audiences at Shakespeare's plays. "Elizabethans were concerned with the fact that an audience must be induced to imagine with a poet's sensibility."²¹ If Bertrand Joseph's analysis of what transpired at the Globe is correct, we can only envy the King's Company that they played before audiences which according to oral interpretation expectations would, I think, be judged perfect.

. . . the audience was asked to imagine, to respond to an aesthetic experience as the result of seeing a stage and properties representing imaginary scenes in which actors created character and incident by making the *words* of an actor come alive. . . . Elizabethan drama seeks not to deceive but to make others conceive; it is the actor's part to represent, to suggest, to stimulate, not to imitate a real person but to represent an imaginary one.²²

It is quite obvious from the above that for the Renaissance audience the responsibility of imaging and creating the illusion of reality was a very real thing, and it allowed the playwright to consider his audience with sophistication and artistic respect. The dramatist did not need to play down to his audience (it may well have been a court performance), for he conceived the audience to be imaginatively capable of going beyond mere verbal listening. And the Renaissance performer was trained "to express emotion . . . to enable his listeners to experience the literary quality of what was pronounced."²³ Thus the success of the Elizabethan playwright was not totally due to his poetic muse but, in no small measure, testified to the quality of listener for whom he wrote.

Returning to the twentieth century and to some concluding applications to oral interpretation, I want to suggest ways a modern audience can also be made "literalists of the imagination" through the efforts of creative oral reading.

First of all, the oral interpreter needs to have respect for the literary tastes of his audience, to assume that good literature (dramatic,

musical, thematically significant) should be chosen for presentation in the classroom and the auditorium. In this way "discrimination," as Shapiro pointed out, can be returned to literature where it is "one of the holiest of concepts." One can help by insisting that "Emperor of Ice Cream" by Wallace Stevens is better oral literature than the "high decibel howls of the pseudo-poet, Dylan MacLoon."²⁴ Or, again, the interpreter can present that kind of literature that forces the listener to participate. This does not have to mean the works of Eliot, Hopkins, and Pound--it can mean Browning, Frost, and Ferlinghetti; Marianne Moore, Housman, and Langston Hughes. He can encourage silent reading, confident that much of it will be seen as needing overt articulation. And above all, the oral interpreter as performer can illustrate to his audience the sense of creative satisfaction that comes from overt participation.

The purpose of oral interpretation is not to gain "an absolute dominion over the minds of spectators,"²⁵ to use Dryden's words; it is to persuade the audience to accept an active part in an act of poetry, to make listening to a poem a celebration of creative imagination. There is no reason why Susanne Langer should not see oral interpretation, like all art, as abstract yet creatively meaningful. If "it is organic and rhythmic, like music, and imaginal, like painting," if it "springs from the power of language to formulate the appearance of reality,"²⁶ there is no reason why oral interpretation should not be not only the most rhetorically poetic of the creative arts, but the most imagistic as well. Reading aloud can be a creative art where the writer and reader combine their best dramatic efforts to achieve an illusion of reality.

NOTES

1. Chloe Armstrong and Paul Brandes, *The Oral Interpreter of Literature* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1963), p. v.

2. Jéré Veilleux, "Toward a Theory of Interpretation," *The Quarterly Journal of Speech* 55 (April 1969): 105-15.

3. This is the explanation that Charlie, "the last of the Delta Drummers," gives for the sad state of salesmanship in Tennessee Williams' one-act play *The Last of My Solid Gold Watches*.

4. Susanne K. Langer, *Problems of Art* (New York: Scribner's, 1957), pp. 140-60.

5. Veilleux, p. 107.

6. Langer, *Feeling and Form: A Theory of Art* (New York: Scribner's 1953), p. 279.

7. Howard Nemerov addressing an oral interpretation festival at Indiana State University, March 6, 1970.

8. Stuart Chase, *The Tyranny of Words* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1938).

9. Quoted in Chase, pp. 167-68.
10. Langer, *Problems of Art*, pp. 140-41.
11. Veilleux, p. 2.
12. George Orwell, "Politics and the English Language," in *Exposition and the English Language*, 2nd ed., eds. James Sanderson and Walter K. Gordon (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1969), p. 35.
13. George N. Gordon, Irving Falk, and William Hodapp. *The Idea Invaders* (New York: Hastings House, 1963), p. 26.
14. Karl Shapiro, "The Poetry Wreck," *Life*, February 15, 1970, pp. 632-33.
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 633-35.
16. W.B. Yeats, "The Second Coming," in *An Introduction to Literature*, ed. Ralph Singleton and Stauton Millet (Cleveland: World Publishing Co., 1966), p. 223.
17. Earl Daniels, *The Art of Reading Poetry* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1941).
18. John Ciardi, *How Does a Poem Mean?* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1959), p. 668.
19. Margaret Robb, *Oral Interpretation of Literature in American Universities* (New York: The H.W. Wilson Co., 1941), p. 14.
20. Quoted in Gordon, Falk, and Hodapp, p. 131.
21. Bertrand Joseph, "Elizabethan Stage and Acting," in *The Age of Shakespeare*, ed. Boris Ford (Baltimore, MD: Penguin Books, 1955), p. 149.
22. *Ibid.*, pp. 158-61.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 152.
24. Shapiro, p. 634.
25. Quoted in Joseph, p. 150.
26. Langer, *Problems of Art*, p. 160.



Robert Pabst meets with Speaker Mark Stoffel.

Laziness may appear attractive,
But work gives satisfaction.

Anne Frank

READING INSTRUCTION, 1984: A MODEST PROPOSAL FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

Aldo F. Cardarelli

Almost a quarter of a century ago, in addressing educators at the Annual Conference of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Arthur Foshay (1961) made this statement: "We are the people who are charged with making something better than the world has ever seen-- a nation full of schools that are excellent" (p. 506). I submit to you that his charge is no less applicable today and, further, the only way our schools will be excellent is if, first, our teachers are excellent.

Although the theme of our conference is "Reading and Reality," it may be a trifle unreal to expect every teacher to be excellent. The report of the National Commission on Excellence in Education, *A Nation at Risk* (1983), was a disappointing reminder that excellence demands constant attention and will not result from a tepid attitude on the part of any of the responsible parties.

Almost five years ago, John Manning (1979), now vice president-elect of the International Reading Association, made this very sobering comment: "The greatest dangers to the schools are much more internal than external; we suffer because we are pedestrian" (p. 881). He went on to say, "We need teachers of reading who are themselves well read. We need reading teachers who are as conversant with Thomas More as they are with teachers' manuals." Finally, he stated, "Teachers of reading in the schools need to read, and to encourage the reading of quality children's literature and higher quality English literature Students in the schools do not need more information; they need to recognize, appreciate, and acquire wisdom," all of which, I suggest, are facilitated by excellent teaching.

If we are to have a national full of schools that are excellent, the individual teacher must make it his or her business to work at being excellent. Each must make a personal response to this call for excellence. We must require excellence of the students with whom it is our privilege to work, but before demanding excellence from others we must first make the commitment to excellence in ourselves.

But how do we know our commitment to excellence is not merely a high-sounding phrase and nothing more? I'm reasonably certain the name Bobby Knight rings a bell for most of you. Knight is the very successful coach at Indiana University and the coach of the 1984 U.S. Olympic basketball team. Some of Knight's methods may be controversial; his record is not. Recently he was asked if his team had the will to win. He replied characteristically, "Every team has the will to win. The question is, do they have the will to prepare." In a somewhat different vein, there is the well-known story told of Ernest Hemingway and of his rewriting of the ending of *A Farewell to Arms* thirty-nine times "until," he says, "until I finally got it right." That is a commitment to excellence. You will know you have made the commitment to excellence when you have made the commitment to prepare, to work long and diligently enough to get it right.

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I would like, then, to present a modest proposal or two for your consideration as you seek excellence when you generate your instructional programs.

The most popular method of teaching reading today involves the use of a basal series which is generally implemented through a directed reading activity. This structured approach begins with a building of background experiences, after which new or troublesome vocabulary is introduced. The selection is read silently, generally followed by a purposeful oral rereading. An extending skills and abilities component follows which tends to deal with word attack skills, though not always. An enriching component completes the cycle. Comprehension is dealt with during the guided silent and oral reading components, and occasionally in the skills component. However, the reality of reading instruction today is that we spend a good deal of time testing rather than teaching comprehension, and many times it is done through a series of questions at the lowest cognitive level, requiring little more than a recollection of details. In some cases it is a mere recollection of the child's experiences which have little or nothing to do with building an understanding of the selection being read. To counter this I propose a much greater emphasis on teaching, not testing, comprehension.

Cloze Procedure

Of the several means of implementing this proposal I suggest the cloze procedure coupled with discussion as a particularly effective instructional technique. The cloze procedure is excellent as a diagnostic or instructional strategy because it requires of the reader that which is absolutely necessary for reading to occur: It requires comprehension.

As a diagnostic tool the cloze procedure requires the reader to read over a passage of 300 to 500 words in which every n th word has been deleted. The reader then provides what he assumes to be the proper replacements for the deleted words. Based on the quantity of exact replacements, the diagnostician is able to make a determination as to the functional level of the reader. This procedure is reasonably easy to generate, administer, and score.

As an instructional technique, cloze-plus-discussion offers much greater flexibility for the teacher. In using this procedure to teach comprehension, a teacher might:

- a. form "buzz groups" in which three or four children discuss words each selected to complete a cloze exercise, providing a rationale to determine which words are "best;"
- b. delete certain words only (e.g., all adjectives, all adverbs) having children discuss differences in intensity generated by words which appear to be similar in meaning; and
- c. use the cloze format over a reading done in the basal (or any text) as a basis for discussion of the selection. (Bortnick & Lopardo, 1973)

What we know about comprehension is rather sketchy. Spache (1981) tells us that we can measure only three subskills at best: word

knowledge, reasoning, and the ability to see relationships. Every one of these abilities is required of a reader in a cloze exercise.

In using a procedure which involves discussion, we increase the probability of retention. The Ekwall and Shanker (1983) "Socony Study" found that students retain:

- 10% of what they read
- 20% of what they hear
- 30% of what they see
- 50% of what they see and hear
- 70% of what they say as they talk
- 90% of what they say as they do a thing. (p. 344)

Although this study is subject to qualification it does highlight the point that we have a greater chance of having students retain what they learn if they are actively involved. In this proposal, the activity involves the opportunity to discuss, defend, and clarify responses, all of which can occur in a cloze-discussion session.

Activities of this type require comprehension on the part of the reader and a willingness on the part of the teacher to expend the effort to prepare exercises requiring more from students than rote responses to recall questions. That is what is meant by excellence in instruction.

Language Experience Approach

Although the basal is an important tool in teaching reading, if a child is experiencing difficulty in learning to read using conventional means, we must do something other than simply giving him more of the same in bigger doses. I am reminded of the physician who had three patients come to him. The first had a pain in his side, so the physician removed the appendix; the second had a terrible headache, so the physician removed the appendix; the third had an ingrown toenail, so the physician removed the appendix. Why? Because he was very good at removing the appendix. The reality of reading instruction today is that often we get so "good" at using the basal that no matter the problem, that's what the patient gets. In response to this I propose that teachers look beyond the basal when they work with corrective or remedial readers. Of the several means of implementing this proposal I suggest the language experience approach as a particularly effective instructional technique.

The language experience approach is an effective but somewhat neglected strategy for use with problem readers. In this approach the children dictate a story/selection to the teacher who writes it, without editing, on newsprint. This selection, which uses the students' ideas, words, and syntax, becomes the "text" for reading instruction. Feelings of security and success are engendered by this process since the children have their own thoughts, words, and style to deal with rather than a text somewhat foreign in each of these elements. Of course, there is no teacher's manual (which may be a blessing), and the teacher is responsible for transferring the selection to individual sheets which the students read, cut up into individual sentences or words, and engage in various exercises and activities. There is plenty of work involved in expanding vocabulary and building word attack skills but the method is a valuable one to use with students having reading problems and to assist them in developing sufficient skills to allow transfer into a basal or other structured

program. Further, the language experience approach is not perceived as being babyish which is a decided advantage if you are working with an older reader.

Putting the two ideas together, the industrious teacher can utilize a cloze-discussion procedure over material dictated in the language experience approach. It would require work, but that is what excellence is all about.

Reading to Children

In any reading program--developmental, remedial, or enrichment--there is the need for much reading by the children and to the children. It is a homely but apt analogy to note that children do not learn to swim by sitting at the side of the pool. Nor do they learn by seeing film strips, answering questions about water safety, and then spending two minutes of every hour with their toes in the water. No, I'm afraid they've got to get into the pool and splash around. Even as they feel the security of an instructor close by, they still must get a nose full of water and come up coughing once in a while in order to get it right. And so it is with reading. Your job is to determine their abilities and interests, match them with interesting reading, and provide sufficient opportunity to splash around, even if they have to go under a couple of times. I am inclined to believe that the reality of reading instruction today is that we have too little time spent by children in silent reading of material which each has selected. I propose that every day children must read books of their choice, and they must read them for a time allotment greater than that given to completing workbook pages or ditto sheets. And coupled with this, they must be read to.

A few months ago I was working with a group of five boys, all of whom had been classified "remedial readers." As part of our time together I had been reading excerpts from books that I thought these boys would enjoy. On one particular day I had just finished reading the chapter, "For the Love of a Man," from Jack London's *Call of the Wild*. It's very touching but written in the strong, vivid style that marks London's work. Frankly, I have to read it over before class so I will be prepared to read the chapter without getting too emotional (showing some emotion to youngsters when you read is not necessarily to be avoided, but it should not spoil an effective reading). Well, I finished the chapter, put the book down and asked the five if they would like to have me read again tomorrow. When they answered affirmatively, I asked if they had any suggestions. Little Jimmy C. thought for just a moment and replied, "Well, you could read that again if you wanted." My point, of course, is that children love good literature, and it doesn't have to be something they have not heard before. But they have to have someone bring it to them, to call their attention, to open new horizons, to make it live. Without question, daily reading to children should be an integral part of excellent reading instruction. With 40,000 children's books in print, which include many superb Newbery and Caldecott selections, the difficulty will be in determining which book is best for a particular group and preparing the reading to assure a good job. It does not have to be a dramatic reading, but it should be an enthusiastic, prepared reading.

It has been said that the only thing more contagious than enthusiasm is the lack of it. Your excellent instruction should be marled by your enthusiasm for books, for reading, and for genuinely wanting to share

these things which mean so much to you. I think that is one of the reasons people go into teaching: the desire to share with others what they know, and feel, and want to explore.

Success and a Positive Self-Concept

Along with enthusiasm there are two additional elements you should consider as you plan instruction: providing opportunities for success and helping to build a positive self-concept.

It is very important that children experience success a good deal of the time. How many of you continue to do things at which you are always unsuccessful? For students to feel good about themselves, about you, and about the task at hand they must experience success, for it is through success that we build sufficient self-esteem to enable us to handle the setbacks.

School should be a place where a child can take risks, a place where he can take a chance in a non-threatening atmosphere. The child should not be afraid of being wrong. In an atmosphere where success is the rule not the exception a child has the opportunity to increase self-esteem. Although there are many ways we have of letting the child know we are aware of and respect him--a smile, a touch on the shoulder, a sincere compliment--and although these may be important, teaching a child to read is a far better way to increase his self-esteem and clearly superior to any knowing smile, no matter how sincere. Many people say they go into education--especially elementary education--because they love children. To this I respond: If you really love children, teach them to read.

All of the modest proposals I have made are in keeping with recommendations of the educators and curriculum specialists who reviewed the findings of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (LaPointe, 1984). Among their several suggestions, they propose that we:

- teach students inferential as well as literal comprehension skills;
- ask students to read longer passages and books rather than short paragraphs only; [and]
- encourage students to make careful, thoughtful responses to their readings. (p. 667)

Closing Remarks

I will close with just a few words on this business of demanding--yes, demanding--excellence from those we teach. That students will give what is expected of them is almost axiomatic. Expect nothing, and that's what you'll get. Expect much, require much, put much into your work, and you and your students will be happier with the outcome.

Some time ago I observed a classroom in which youngsters were writing poetry. The teacher put the children's efforts on a display board marked, "Our Best Work." One youngster wrote the following which was placed on this "best work" board:

There once was a fat little pig,
Who always was wearing a wig,
And always was dancing a jig,
And always went riggy-rig-rig.

I submit to you that while I do not know the child, I do know he can do better. I know that is not his best work, and I insult him if I allow him to settle for that as his best. To accept it as his best is the easy way out for both of us. Perhaps writing poetry was something he didn't want to do and this was dashed off to fulfill a requirement. In such case, he never should have been asked to write in the first place, for that is certainly neither poetry nor his best work.

I have two or three "sayings" that I try to keep in mind as I do my work and help students to do theirs. One is, "You've gotta kiss a lot of frogs before you meet your prince." My job is to keep those students kissin' frogs--and to kiss my share in the bargain; to work at it; never to be satisfied with less than a genuine effort.

Another is, "If you think you can--or if you think you can't--you're right." We have our charge: to fill this nation with schools that are excellent. If we work hard, I think we can.

Finally, an old sales manager of mine used to say, "Do something--right or wrong--do something." And so I say to you: *Do something.*

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Speaker Aldo F. Cardarelli



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